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Memoirs

My Life and Faith

Ri In Mo

Memoirs

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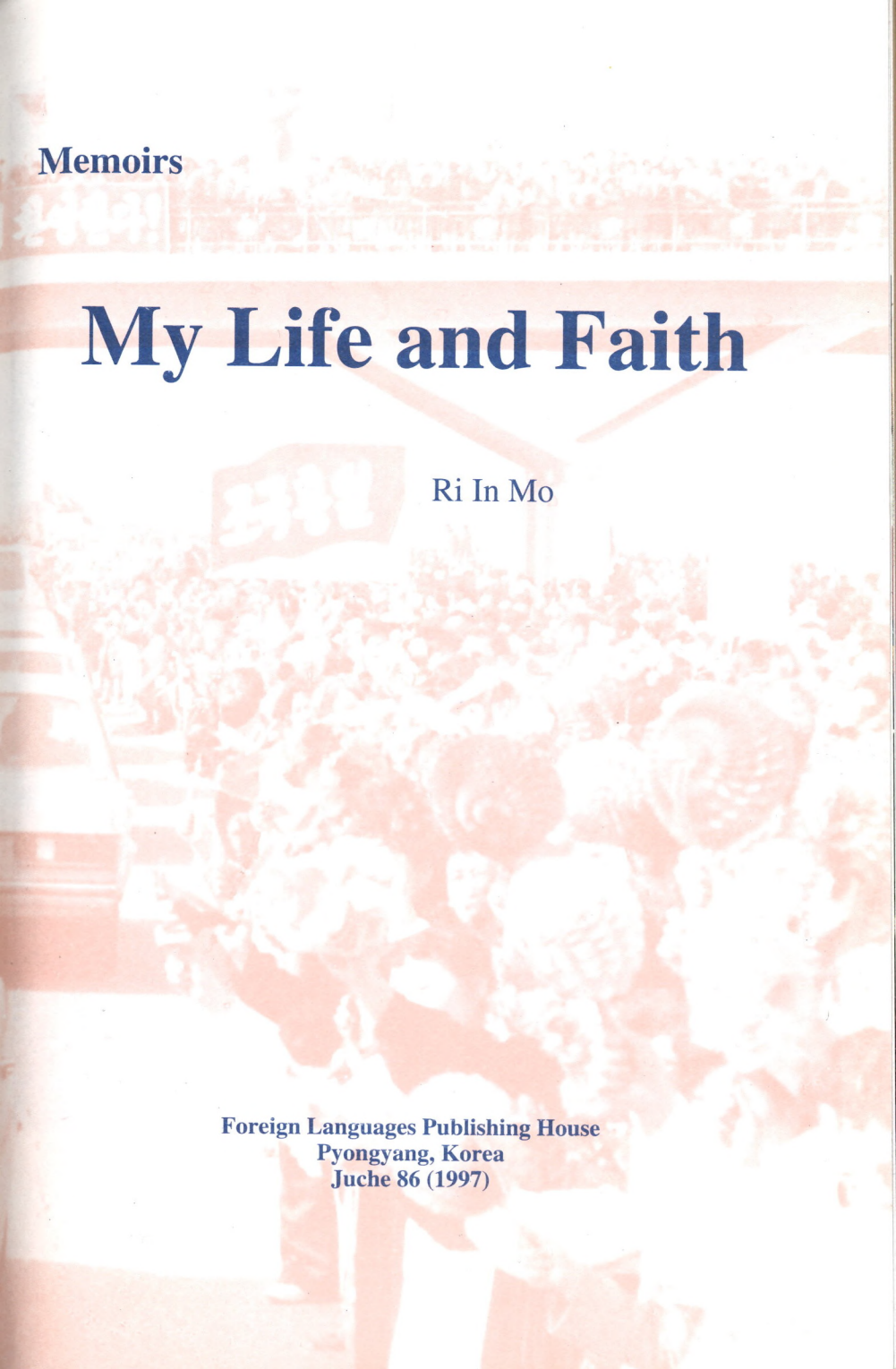

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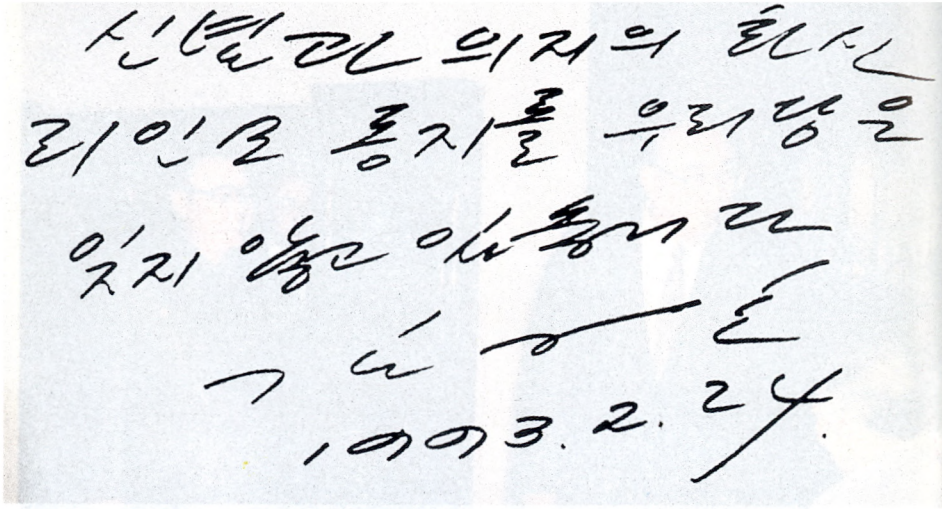
Juche 86 (1997)

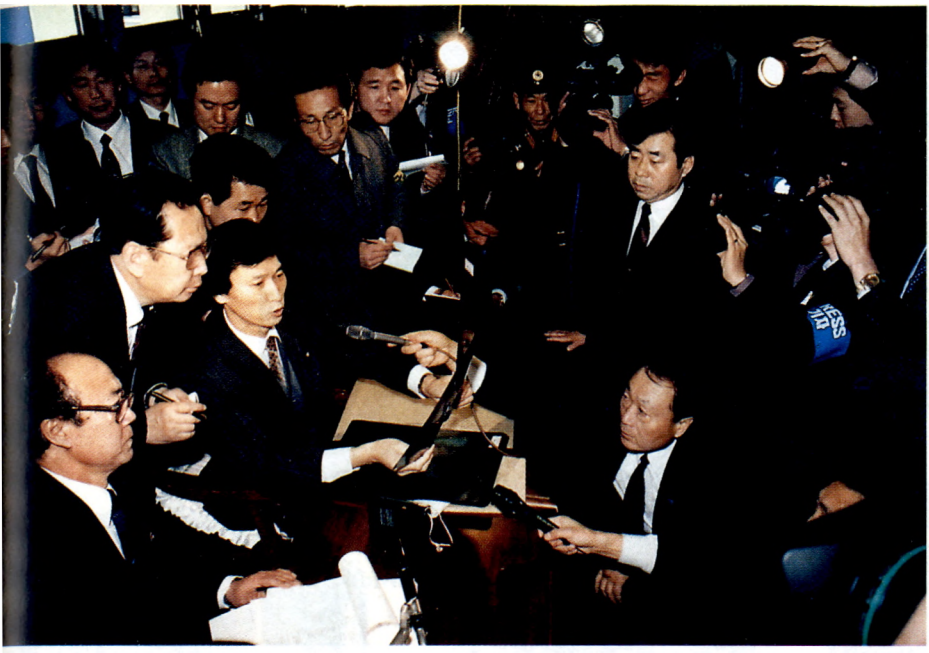
The President Kim Il Sung and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il calling on Ri In Mo in hospital



Our Party does not forget
Comrade Ri In Mo, the incar-
nation of faith and will

Kim Jong Il

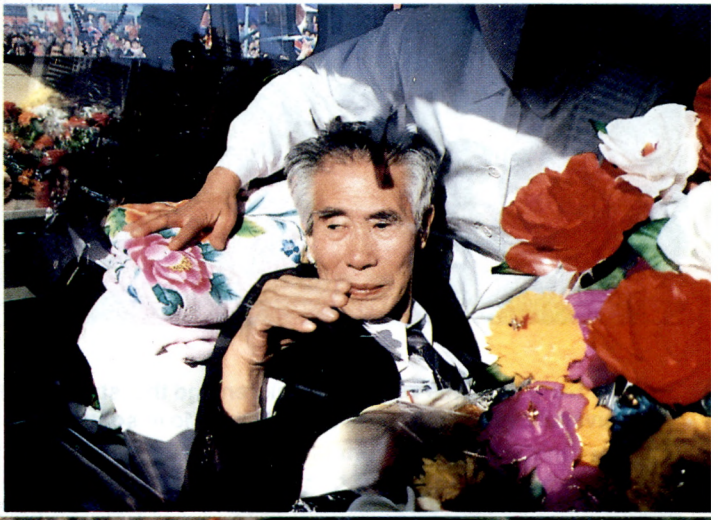
February 24, 1993



Handing over of the medical charter by the south Korean doctors to the north Korean colleagues in Panmunjom
Ri In Mo meets his family after brief emergency treatment

Kim Sang Won and his wife in south Korea who kindly took care of Ri In Mo meet Ri In Mo's family

Hundreds of thousands of Pyongyangites enthusiastically welcoming Ri In Mo returning to the motherland after 43 years' separation



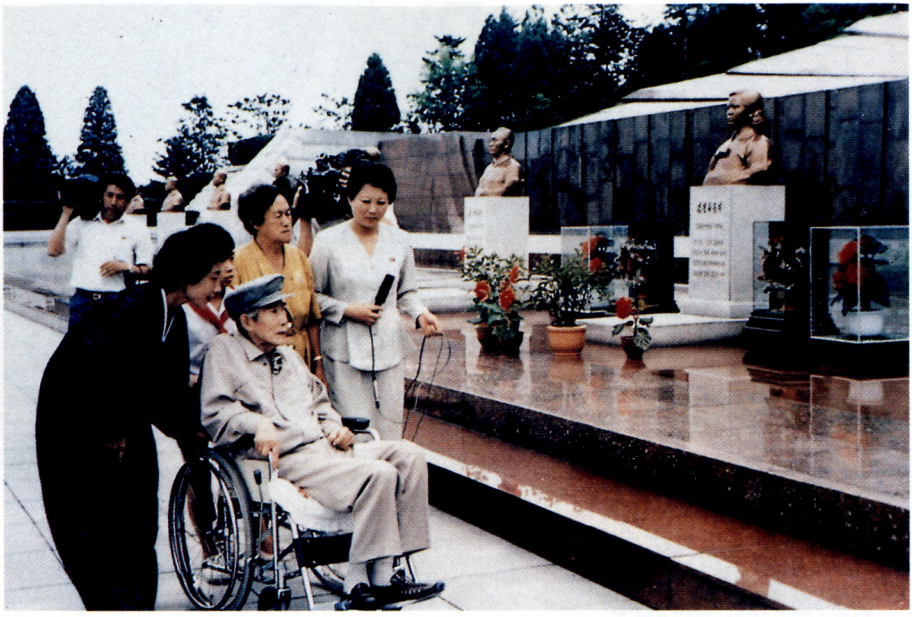
Kim Sang Won, his wife, their children and the students of Pusan University who kindly took care of Ri In Mo in south Korea

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the dear leader Comrade Kim Jong Il gave Ri In Mo a cosy house and deluxe car and arranged his 76th and 80th birthday dinners

Ri In Mo having a good time together with his grandchildren

Ri In Mo pays his respects before the bronze statue of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung on Mansu Hill

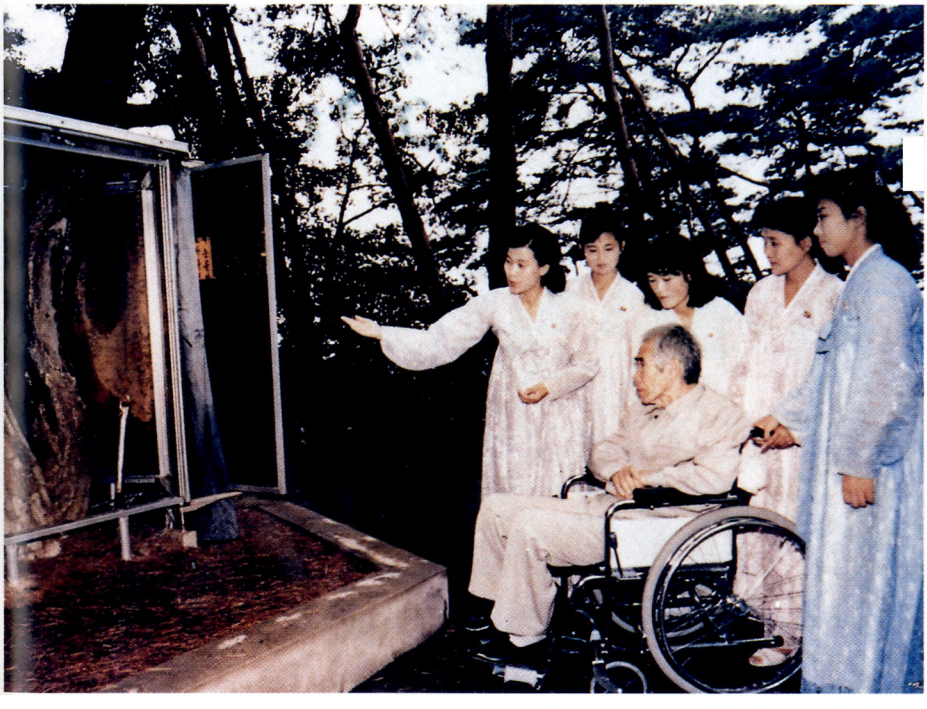
Ri In Mo visits the house in Mangyongdae where the respected Comrade Kim Il Sung was born and the log cabin in the secret camp on Mt. Paektu where Comrade Kim Jong Il was born

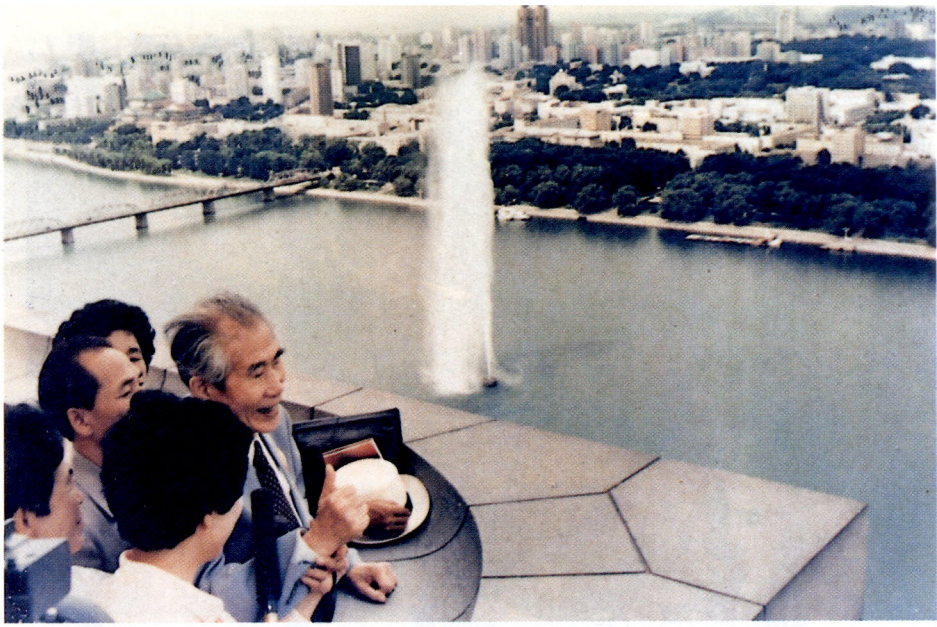


Ri In Mo visits the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery

At Lake Chon on Mt. Paektu

Ri In Mo visits the revolutionary battlefield in the area around Mt. Paektu





On the observation balcony of the Tower of the Juche Idea

In front of the Arch of Triumph

Ri In Mo going to the United States of America for medical treatment

Ri In Mo meets the head of the protocol in front of the UN building in New York

Ri In Mo having a rest in New York

Ri In Mo having a good time together with children

Ri In Mo meets his friends in his birthplace

Ri In Mo was awarded the Order of **Kim Il Sung** and the title of Hero of the Republic, the highest honour of the citizen

Eidtor's Note

Nelson Mandela of South Africa, who spent 27 years in prison, is generally regarded as having been the longest-serving political prisoner of modern times. However, Ri In Mo of Korea spent 34 years in prison, after being wounded and taken prisoner in January 1952. He actually served over 40 years if the years he spent with his movements confined by the barbarous "Public Security Act" and "Observation and Security Act" of south Korea are added.

In this period he fought in defence of his beliefs. If he had agreed to conversion, the matter might have turned out otherwise. If he had ever had a mind to renounce his beliefs a few seconds only would have been sufficient for him to secure his freedom. If the 34 years of his life in prison were divided into minutes, they would amount to nearly 18 million. It is astounding that he spent those countless moments remaining faithful to his principles without yielding to any pressure and with a pure and steadfast human conscience.

Conversion meant signing a statement to the effect that one admitted and repented of crimes or one supports a certain political power, abandoning one's ideology. Ri In Mo said, "I did not agree to conversion, because in that case that would have meant saying what I never believed that the north is bad and the south is good. Conversion is an absurd institution". Conversion is an absurd institution! This is the dignified declaration of a man of staunch faith. Genuine man is said to live and die in faith. If he gave up his faith and became a selfish man, if he impaired his principles and yielded, how could he become this immortal hero who emerged in Korea and is known worldwide?

He returned to Pyongyang as a chronic invalid who seemed to have no hope of recovery, but he recovered his health in only 70 days after his return, and began to write.

Ri In Mo's life shows how strong a man with great faith and will is. His life potently shows that faith and will are stronger than guns and

swords, and cannot be shackled. His indomitable life is a paean to human life which attains immortality through faith.

The editorial board has published versions in different languages of his writings *Incarnation of Faith and Will* and *The Withered Old Leaf Turns Green*, and is issuing versions in different languages of his memoirs *My Life and Faith*, which he wrote in 1996.

Juche 86 (1997)*

* Korea has instituted the year number of Juche beginning with the year 1912 in which the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung who enunciated the immortal Juche idea and led the revolution and construction in Korea to victory was born to immortalize his revolutionary life and everlasting services and carry forward and complete his revolutionary cause.

It was decided to institute the year number of Juche on the eighth of July 1997, the third anniversary of his death.

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Already one year has passed since I came over to north Korea via Panmunjom.

On this day, one year ago, I met my wife after 43 years' separation and, holding her hand, said, "Now I have nothing to regret even if I die straight away." In fact, at that time I had nothing more to wish for; my health was in such a hopeless state that there was no knowing whether my life would last even one or two hours longer. I was as good as dead when I was handed over to north Korea, under the "humanistic" cover of "repatriation".

However, on March 19, 1994, one year later, I am writing this book at my home in Sojang-dong, Pothonggang District, Pyongyang City. This is my home, to which I returned after 43 years.

On the opposite wall is a scroll bearing a picture of the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il writing in bold strokes. The words written on the lower part of the scroll grip my heart:

"Our Party does not forget Comrade Ri In Mo, the incarnation of faith and will."

These words were written personally by the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il in reply to a letter sent to him by my daughter on February 24, one month before my return.

Only upon coming over to north Korea did I come to learn how hard a struggle had been waged to secure my return and what deep solicitude the great leader and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il had shown for me, planning closely knit operations and keeping constantly in charge.

When I was still in south Korea my socialist motherland conferred on me the Order of Kim Il Sung and the title of Hero of the DPRK, the highest honours one can enjoy.

An ancient saying goes, "Dutifulness is as highly regarded as a lofty mountain, while death is considered as light as a feather." I often thought of this saying while I was in prison in south Korea. I now realize forcefully that even if I were to die now I would have nothing to regret. However, at a national conference of veterans the great leader and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il told me that I should live 40 years more.

If there are guardian spirits in the world the ones protecting my life are the great leader and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il. My only thought has been how to repay their love and trust in whatever little way I can. But what can I, an old and crippled man, do?

Forty-three years ago I left north Korea as a war correspondent of the Korean People's Army, and I have not engaged in any other job since then. So I am still a war correspondent of the Korean People's Army.

I thought I had performed my last duty as a war correspondent all those years ago in south Korea. But, coming over to north Korea I found that my duty as a war correspondent had not ended. My health has improved and I now have some leisure, so I re-read my memoirs published in south Korea.

As the reader may know, my humble memoirs were written twice. The first time, they were published as a four-part series in the south Korean magazine *Mal* . Later, I supplemented them with what came anew to my memory, and the fuller version was published in book form edited by Sin Jun Yong, a journalist with *Mal* . Each line betrays the hastiness with which I wrote my memoirs at odd times in an old folks' home when I was alone, listening for sounds of someone approaching and concentrating more on where to hide my writing if someone suddenly entered the room than to phrasing.

The thought that I should rewrite my memoirs grew, and the urgency of this has led me to take up my pen again.

My purpose is not to present an accurate record of what I have done, for I have done nothing deserving to be recorded in history.

It was not out of modesty that I said, "I do not deserve such a welcome" on my way from Panmunjom to Pyongyang on March 19 last year. It was the great leader and the respected leader Kim Jong Il and those who welcomed me that made me out to be a hero.

In south Korea everyone who met me asked, "Why didn't you convert, instead of allowing yourself to be confined to prison for 34 years?"

To their question I wanted to explain what the source of my faith and will power was for 34 years, nay, 43 years.

But in south Korea I could not write or speak about it.

I said in the foreword to my memoirs carried in *Mal* : "According to the 'Observation and Security Act' I could be put back in prison at any time on the slightest pretext." Moreover, my feet were fettered by "residence limitations". Although I had been released from prison, it could be said that I have been "transferred" from a small prison to a big prison and that I was officially a dumb person, as I have been given an unwritten order to hold my tongue.

Whenever I was asked such a question I was unwittingly reminded of the following stirring poem by Yu Jin O, who was ordered to keep his mouth shut before the demonstrators during the February 7 national salvation struggle after liberation:

When I cry out like thunder
Swallowing the words which should not be spoken,

Standing again
On the rugged land,
Supporting the sky alone,
The homeland expands together with my breathing
Minute by minute...

I would like to tell the public aloud what I could not speak or write before. This is the first reason for rewriting my memoirs.

The second reason is a sense of obligation to those comrades who laid down their lives fighting for independence, democracy and national reunification.

When I heard or read the "memorial addresses" south Korean writers made from the standpoint of "anticommunism", as if they stood on the platform of justice, and called the lives of those comrades "lives which disappeared, run over mercilessly by the wheels of history", my heart seethed with resentment. Were the lives of my comrades really so insignificant?

It is a fact that even the graves of my comrades on Mts. Jiri, Sokri and Taebaek cannot be located, while flunkeyists and traitors to the nation swagger about to great acclaim. But this does not serve as justification for burying the memory of my comrades in nihilism and scepticism.

When the animal and plant life which thrived in ancient times was buried deep under the earth due to diastrophism it was not just simple death, for this death produced the coal which now gives mankind heat and light.

I believe that likewise the blood and deaths scattered over the mountains and fields of south Korea in due time will become burning coal in the hearts of the people and kindle the flame of anti-US and anti-puppet struggle.

The people will learn the history of fierce struggle between independence and flunkeyism and between patriotism and betrayal of the nation in that era, and uncover the true colors of flunkeyism and betrayal of the nation which hid themselves under the cloak of "anticommunism". If modern history is to be properly appraised the cloak of "anticommunism" must be removed. When that is done the south Korean people will realize that it was not communism that was being battled at that time, but opposition to Japan, patriotism, independence and democracy, namely themselves.

What did our comrades really desire? Did they cry only "Long live national reunification!"? They wanted a reunified homeland without pro-Japanese, flunkeyists and traitors to the nation, a homeland without exploitation and oppression... Where was such a homeland?... History

will judge justly. If I could only have brought back the remains of those who were buried in the nameless mountains and fields...!

Coming here, I have better learned to appreciate those comrades-in-arms who died before us, the destiny of those from whom I parted in this or that way on the road of struggle and of their bereaved families.

I keenly feel the obligation to inform people in north and south Korea and abroad who read my memoirs about the fate of my comrades and their families.

Coming here, I came to acquire an accurate idea of the political situation which had changed rapidly during those years which I spent in prison.

I saw the world through the crack of the prison door, narrower than the eye of a needle, for 43 years. Now I feel that at last my eyes and ears have fully opened. I experience the irresistible desire to look back on those 43 years, nay, on my career of almost 80 years through recorded history.

Such are the reasons why I decided to rewrite my memoirs.

But I hold dear the recollections I wrote in south Korea. I discovered the truth that I should continue to live in the spirit of those recollections and that I can fight as long as I am alive. These memoirs affirm that I, an invalid, am still the communist Ri In Mo whom the enemy hates and fears.

Therefore I would like to confine myself to making some revision of the notes I wrote in south Korea, adding remarks I could not make then and referring to the will and fate of my comrades.

As mentioned above, my profession for 43 years was that of a war correspondent of the Korean People's Army. The Party has not yet assigned any other task to me. Therefore, I still intend to carry out my mission as a war correspondent. I am duty-bound to inform posterity accurately of the glorious road of struggle our comrades took, of their noble spirit and their beautiful lives which they laid down for the reunified happy homeland. They were soldiers who laid down their lives at the front line for the Party and the leader, and for the sacred cause of the nation. I, as a war correspondent, have a duty to write about them, including their last moments.

March 19, 1994

Ri In Mo, war correspondent of
the Korean People's Army

1. THE KAEMA PLATEAU

Phungsan, My Native Place

I was born as a posthumous son, and the only son in my family, on August 24, 1917, in Joksu village in Mijon-ri, Ansu Sub-County (today's Migam-ri, Kim Hyong Gwon County).

Phungsan is the highest slash-and-burn cultivation area on the Kaema Plateau. The inhabitants had moved from Pukchong, Hamhung and other places where they had been unable to earn a livelihood and eked out a living, raising oats and potatoes.

I would like to trace back the history of my family first, because it is closely connected with the history of Phungsan.

Our original home was in Yoo village in Hagoso Sub-County, Pukchong County, South Hamgyong Province (today's Imjadong-ri, Toksong County). The village was inhabited solely by people with the surname Ri.

My great-grandfather passed the primary state examination (*jinsa*) in his youth and boasted of it all his life. He kept a mistress in the seat of Pukchong County, squandered the family property on drink and debauchery and sold the small piece of land handed down from generation to generation in his late years, I am told. When he died, he left not a patch of land in Yoo village to my grandfather, who moved to Phungsan, taking four sons with him.

Even after my family was ruined because of my great-grandfather's extravagant way of life, my grandfather still seemed to have been proud of my great-grandfather having passed the primary state examination. The rumour spread far and wide, and even reached the ears of the person 12 kilometres away who later became my maternal grandmother. She had lost her husband early and brought up one son and one daughter, leading a decent life relying on some inherited land. Impressed with the *jinsa* status of my great-grandfather, she married her daughter into my family.

She proudly told her neighbours that her daughter had become the daughter-in-law of a *jinsa* family, but her pride was short-lived; my father suddenly died of disease less than one year after the marriage.

Even now I do not know what disease my father caught. He got boils on his lips at first and then on his belly and fell ill, I was told when I was young. But my family was too poor to afford to consult a doctor. He lay

sick in bed and his condition suddenly grew worse and he died, I was told. I wonder whether it was caused by some secondary infection.

I was born seven months after his death, adding trouble to the sorrowful life of a woman who had become a widow at the age of 18.

I was more often called by the nickname *Yubok* (posthumous son) than In Mo. I was also called *Jongbawi*, but I do not know the reason.

Coming back to Pyongyang, I found my grandsons and granddaughters attending university or middle school. I am already well over 70 years old, but thoughts of my mother occur to me afresh.

She devoted her whole life to me, her only son, and had to spend most of her life waiting for me. Her youth was devoid of joy, being an endless succession of burdens and sorrows.

My maternal grandmother, who grew old as a widow and was imbued with Confucian morality, always kept her daughter on a tight rein and allowed her no freedom whatsoever.

When my mother once changed into new clothes to go to market my maternal grandmother flew into a rage, saying, "What would people say if they saw a widow going to market in a new dress? Change back into your everyday clothes at once!" Vivid in my memory is the distraught look on my mother's face as she went to change into her everyday wear. Although I was very young, I must have pitied her, so the memory seems to have been engraved on my mind. But my maternal grandmother had no sympathy for her. Almost every day she would tell my mother: "Keep a sharp knife under your pillow at night." In those days I was young and did not know the reason. But when I think of it now, it seems to have been a precaution against widow kidnapping.

Meanwhile, my eldest aunt died of disease several years after my birth. My mother then had to lead a life full of hardships in the home of her husband's parents, taking upon herself the cares of housekeeping, becoming the eldest daughter-in-law of a poor family and, at the same time, bringing up three cousins.

My mother spared no pains to bring up the three cousins and her son all alike, and had plenty of worries as the family was in needy circumstances. In spring, when the peach trees blossomed, she used to collect wild greens and serve them at the table, saying that they were tastier than meat. But I, her mischievious son, did not understand her feelings and only showed bad temper. What pain this must have caused my mother!

In the farming season she worked in the field all day, leaving me to play at the edge of the field. Slash-and-burn farming requires much labour but yields little. After burning the field and clearing it of tree stumps and roots it is planted with grains. This gives good yields in the first one or two years, but from the third year the yield is not even enough to cover the cost of the seeds.

My mother cultivated such unproductive fields in tears and sweat. She lacked the strength to clear new land and went in fear of the Japanese "forest law".

My mother worked hard all day long in the fields, managed household affairs and in the evening weaved hemp cloth.

She used to fall asleep with her tousled head resting on the hand loom as she wove hemp cloth late into the night.

Around that time my mother seemed to have thought of sending me to live with my maternal uncle. I do not think she made this decision merely because of physical exhaustion. It must have worried her that other people thought that she could not do a good job of bringing up her son and his cousins. Moreover, my maternal uncle had no children.

Around 1920 my mother, who had been a faithful wife, set about moving the remains of her husband buried near Joksu village to an ancestral burial ground in Hagoso Sub-County, Pukchong County, his place of origin, using the money she had earned by weaving hemp cloth for several years. To travel by ox-cart from Joksu to Pukchong took two days and nights. At that time I was about four years old, I think. Before leaving, my mother sent me to my maternal uncle (Kim Ung In) who taught at Phabal Primary School in those days.

My memories of my childhood begin there.

In the evening of the day my mother left me with my uncle and aunt. I refused to go to bed. When my uncle asked me why, I replied, "If I fall asleep my eyelids stick together. My mother, who knows how to open them for me, is not here. What if I fall asleep and cannot open my eyes?"

At that time I had caught an infectious eye disease, and whenever I awoke the gum in my eyes prevented me opening them. So my mother used to remove the gum with cotton soaked in warm water. Of course, my anxiety was not confined to this only, as I must have felt that this parting from my mother was not an ordinary one.

My uncle reassured me by saying, "I taught your mother how to open glued eyes. I am just as good at opening glued eyes as she is. So put your mind at ease and go to sleep."

Thereupon, I lay down and went to sleep.

After I fell asleep my maternal uncle and aunt shed tears, lamenting the miserable plight of his sister and discussed bringing me up.

That night my mother must have also shed tears, driving an oxcart with the remains of my father to Pukchong.

But even after sending me to live with her brother, my mother still had plenty of worries.

Sometimes she traveled 24 or 28 kilometres from her husband's

home to her original home to see me. Even now in my mind's eye there vividly appears the image of my mother, turning away her distressed face, pretending not to see me, unable to hug me as her own child before the childless aunt who took care of me like her own son.

Looking back on the past now, I suspect that my mother led a lonely life after she lost her husband at the age of 18 simply because of the incessant admonitions of her own mother, who was imbued with feudal Confucian ideology. My mother, who was by nature reticent, never expressed her views about this. However, I believe she took seriously the obligations of a daughter-in-law in her husband's home, and made a firm determination to bring me up, the posthumous son, on her own without remarrying. Such being her intention, it must have caused her great pain to have to entrust her only child to her brother's care.

My maternal uncle and aunt took good care of me, treating me like their own son. They had some inherited property and my aunt brought some property with her when she married, so they could be said to have been one of the better-off families in Phungsan. My uncle had studied for a while in Seoul, but had moved to Phungsan because of involvement in some Leftist activities and had got a job as a teacher.

He was a mild, ingenuous man. In his youth he had once set out to follow the Independence Army, but gave up the idea, unable to leave behind alone my mother, who had become a widow in her youth, I am told. I wonder if he regretted this all his life.

He tried to bring me up with a character that was the opposite of his own. When later I engaged enthusiastically in revolutionary activities he did not reproach me but helped me quietly in the background with all sincerity. Perhaps it was his unfulfilled ambitions that spurred him to bring me up to be courageous from childhood, implant patriotism in me and obtain books and newspapers that would educate me in social realities. The memory of my uncle Kim Ung In who brought me up for over 20 years remains engraved on my mind not only as a substitute father but also as the teacher of life who helped me to tell right from wrong in my early days and go on to lead an upright life.

The Mt. Paektu Armed Unit Which Implanted the Anti-Japanese Fighting Spirit in My Young Mind

When I reached school age I entered Phabal Primary School in Ansan Sub-County.

There was a man who had been teaching at the school since graduating from Hamhung Normal School. He came from Anbyon (in today's Kangwon Province) where most of the believers in the Chondo faith in South Hamgyong Province lived. He was also a believer in Chondo and taught us its doctrines. And we followed him well under its influence.

In 1926 Choe Rin from the new faction of Chondoism extracted from the Japanese imperialists a promise to allow the establishment of a Korean parliament in exchange for giving up the independence of Korea and launched a "self-government movement".

In the 1930s believers in Chondo formed the Chondo Faith Youth Party and launched zealously a youth movement, an enlightenment movement and other campaigns devoid of any political character, in opposition to the revolutionary peasant movement led by socialists.

At that time I was only a little over ten years old and was not aware of this situation. As our teacher taught us, I believed that our country was badly off because Koreans were ignorant and lazy, and that only when the national character was changed could we be better off.

Around that time a young man called Jong Un Gil returned to his native village. According to a rumour, he had attended Pukchong Agricultural School but been expelled on the grounds that he had been the mastermind behind a student strike. In the evening he used to gather village children and teach them anti-Japanese patriotic ideas. Learning of this, our teacher who believed in the Chondo faith spoke ill of him, saying, "That person was expelled from his school because he led a student strike. He is a bad fellow who is disloyal to the Japanese emperor", and prevented us from approaching Jong Un Gil.

One day an unexpected incident took place, which awoke us to the fact that the teacher's behaviour was a traitorous act of defending Japanese imperialism and abusing patriots.

One August day in 1930 my aunt sent me to buy noodles for lunch. She gave me a large brass bowl and a five-*jon* coin. At that time a bowl of oats noodles cost one *jon*, so for five *jon* I could buy more than enough noodles for our four family members – my grandmother, uncle, aunt and I–to eat.

Phabal-ri was by the Phabal Stream, a tributary of the Hochon River and on the road linking Pukchong with Phungsan, and a rather busy place of semi-agricultural and semi-commercial character. Fruit, rice and fish from the Pukchong area were transported to Phungsan and its surrounding area via Phabal-ri across the Huchi Pass, and potatoes, starch and hops produced in the area north of Phungsan were sent to Pukchong through Phabal-ri. Therefore, in Phabal-ri as well as the houses of slash-

and-burn farmers, there was a large market area full of pedlars' stalls and inns.

The Japanese kept a tight guard over this busy place. They set up a police station near the market place, headed by a vicious inspector named Matsuyama. He so harassed the local Koreans that he went by the nickname of "Opasi" (digger wasp). He was so hated that boys like myself used to throw stones at him whenever he washed himself in the Pabal Stream.

Let me continue the story.

When I was going out of the gate, taking the large brass bowl and money with me, there sounded a thunderous "Bang!" from the direction of the police station, which was 13 or 14 houses away. Phabal-ri was a secluded mountain village where gunshots were never heard, so the unexpected sound of a gun being fired was enough to start my heart thumping.

When I looked in the direction of the police station I saw people trooping toward it from the market place, and other people looking out of the windows of their houses. Others were fleeing toward the mountains behind the Phabal Stream. They were those who used to drink wine with policemen in ordinary times and were pointed at with scorn for informing the police of what the village people said. They seemed to have apprehended danger.

The thought occurred to my young mind that something serious had happened.

I threw the bowl back into the house and ran like an arrow in the direction of the police station, clenching my fists.

Thirty or so people were already gathered in front of it. All of them were poor people who had been slighted and tormented by the Japanese. The adults as well as the children were excited.

They seemed to believe that the men who had fired the rifle were protecting them.

I forced my way through the crowd and peered into the police station. A person in the police station who looked refined and gentle beckoned me to come in. Prompted by curiosity and his beckoning, I quickly entered. I unexpectedly found there Jong Un Gil talking with him about something.

Looking around the main room, I saw that "Opasi" had been shot and was writhing around on the floor, bleeding. I trembled all over. I was scared at the sight, but at the same time felt great satisfaction. So, there is no need to mention the feelings of the adults who had been harassed by "Opasi".

The person who told me to come in asked me if I was afraid. When I replied that I was not, he patted me on the shoulder and said that only when all such rascals were disposed of could the Korean people be better off.

Looking round the room, I found and picked up two spent cartridges.

Going out, I saw three men, including the one who had called me into the police station and who seemed to be their leader, wearing straw sandals and hemp clothes and each holding a Mauser rifle. I remember that they all had the same kind of hair style.

Their appearance seemed to be dignified and imposing, even to a youngster like myself.

Kneeling before them, a Korean policeman kowtowed and pleaded with them for his life, rubbing his hands in supplication. There was none of his usual swaggering and shouting on that occasion!

One of the three said to him, "I should like to shoot dead right away you and your like who act as cat's-paws of the Japanese imperialists, who invaded our country. But I will spare your life, believing that you have a bit of a conscience left, as you are a Korean. Stop being a policeman serving the Japanese and go back to your farm as an honest Korean."

The policeman gratefully agreed to do this.

At that moment the wife of the hated "Opasi" ran out of a nearby house, barefoot, and fled toward the hill behind the house. One of the three men levelled his rifle at her, but the man who seemed to be the leader pulled his comrade's arm down.

Frankly speaking, we were all hoping that the woman would be shot, but the leader said, "Esteemed people, you have had a hard time. We are the revolutionary army of Mt. Paektu, which fights to drive out the Japanese and win back the country. Our people are badly off and suffer misfortune because of the Japanese. We cannot become better off without smashing the Japanese. We have disposed of the police chief here to avenge the people on our way to Tanchon to help the patriotic struggle of the peasants who are fighting barehanded against the heavily armed Japanese forces. However, we cannot stay to protect you here. So, please return home."

They then went to a sweet shop near the police station, and asked the owner for money to help them with their travel expenses. But the shopkeeper offered them only two copper coins worth one *jon* each. The armed men returned the coins in disgust and went on their way.

At that moment the sight of the owner of the shop became hateful to me. To think that he could maltreat in such manner patriots who were fighting to drive out the Japanese and win back our country! I thought:

The rich people are blinded by money. They have no patriotism in their hearts and seek only their own interests. If I had been one of the guerrillas I would have shot the greedy shop owner. I wondered why they had left so meekly. From that time on I hated the like of that shopkeeper and began to think that I should stand by the poor people.

That night I lay in bed, tightly gripping the two empty cartridges I had picked up in the police station, and for a long time pictured myself holding a Mauser like the guerrillas and wreaking vengeance for the Korean people by shooting the Japanese. A bold idea to emulate them seized my mind. This was the first anti-Japanese idea implanted in my heart.

The impressive figures of the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters who operated on the Kaema Plateau in those remote days and kindled the flame of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle in the heart of a 13-year-old boy there still dimly appear in my memory. I often wonder what would have become of me if it had not been for them.

The shot they fired in Pabal-ri was a fateful one which led me to the front of the anti-Japanese struggle; otherwise I might have led a life in poverty and ignorance or become a devout follower of the Chondo faith.

An Unforgettable Revolutionary Senior

After that event I and several of my friends went to see Jong Un Gil, to whom we had given a wide berth because of the warning of the teacher who believed in the Chondo faith. The speech of the leader of the guerrillas had convinced us that the teacher was wrong. He said that the Koreans were suffering because of the Japanese, while the teacher blamed the Koreans themselves for being lazy. What an absurdity! My mother, for instance, worked hard but was still trapped in poverty.

When we called on Jong, he received us gladly. We asked about the men who had executed "Opasi", and Jong replied, "They are members of the armed unit commanded by Kim Il Sung operating in the area around Mt. Paektu. Kim Hyong Gwon was the leader."

When I think over this remark, various conjectures occur to me. How could Comrade Jong Un Gil have been so well informed that he even knew one of their names? I heard afterwards that at that time a man in a straw-hat had guided the trio to our village. I wonder whether he was not Comrade Jong Un Gil. Moreover, Comrade Jong Un Gil was with them in the police station, wasn't he? Perhaps this was not a coincidence. At any rate, Jong had joined the anti-Japanese struggle and was the person who led me to take the first step in my revolutionary career.

Comrade Jong Un Gil told us about Tanchon, to where the armed force was said to be going.

"A forest ranger who acted as an underling of the Japanese detained innocent peasants and beat them like dogs or pigs," he said. "Enraged peasants smashed up the county office and police station. The Japanese shot many people dead. In Tanchon the Peasants' Union is now being formed. Kim Hyong Gwon was leading his men to Tanchon to help the peasants fighting the well-armed Japanese soldiers and police."

Jong also told us about the general strike in Wonsan and the students' movement in Kwangju which took place in 1929. He explained that when their colleagues were beaten by a vicious Japanese overseer workers in Wonsan went on a strike for four months, calling for the discharge of the overseer and a secure livelihood for workers. The students of Kwangju Senior Elementary School courageously fought Japanese students who had taunted Korean girl students. We listened to these stories, clenching our fists in anger.

"Our Korean nation is not dead but alive," he said. "Armed guerrillas in the mountains, workers with hammers in their hands in factories and peasants with hoes in the countryside are fighting the Japanese. In schools students demonstrate and go on strike. If they continue to fight our nation will definitely win independence."

Even today, after more than 60 years have passed, these stories are still vivid in my memory. It is perhaps because I heard them when the echoes of the shots in Phabal-ri were still ringing in my ears. When I told Jong that I had picked up two empty cartridges in the police station, he said that he was glad to hear of it, and told me to keep them carefully. Returning home that night, I wrapped them in cloth and hid them at the bottom of wardrobe unnoticed by my uncle and aunt.

I still remember that I could not fall asleep for a long time that night because Jong's words reverberated in my mind:

"The Korean nation is not dead but alive and fighting...."

The imposing figures of the guerrillas from Mt. Paektu holding Mausers appeared in my mind's eye.

"The teacher who believes in the Chondo faith told a lie. The Korean nation is not lazy and ignorant but is alive and fighting the Japanese!"

That night I dreamed of joining the guerrillas of Mt. Paektu on horseback and chasing away the Japanese. This dream became my lifelong vision. Later almost every day I and my friends visited Jong Un Gil after school. He instilled socialist ideas into us, telling us about capitalism, socialism, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

It was of course impossible for a 13-years-old schoolboy to fully

understand all these things, but I came to feel that, although I did not know what socialism really was, I thought I should become a socialist if I was to fight the Japanese, because the socialists, the Peasants' Union, trade unions and the guerrillas were fighting doggedly to drive the Japanese out of Korea.

At any rate I believed Jong's words wholeheartedly – to such an extent that I thought: If he tells me to die I am ready to die. I wonder whether it was simply out of respect for the man. Anti-Japanese fervor was implanted in my breast soon after I had been wakened to reality by the sound of rifle shots. Now I think it was my warm affection for the man and his ideology that gave me the inspiration to fight the Japanese, traversing the vast Kaema Plateau.

That is why I do not forget him even in the evening phase of my life and recall him with gratitude.

The following event which took place in those days also often comes to my mind.

Outside our village there was a memorial stone which the pro-Japanese elements in the village had set up in memory of the Japanese police head "Opasi". There was a rumour that the ghost of "Opasi" haunted the empty house beside the memorial stone. So we children dared not go near the place at night.

One evening we gathered in Jong Un Gil's house. First Jong told us about materialism and that there are no such things as ghosts. Then he produced red flag and said, "To confirm whether there is a ghost or not, let one child place the flag in the kitchen of the empty house next to the memorial stone and another child go and fetch it."

He told me to take the flag, and I went hesitantly to the empty house. Opening the door of the kitchen, I was just going to enter when I heard a knocking sound. My whole body shuddered. Seized with fright, I threw down the flag anywhere and ran as fast as I could away from the house. Another boy, sent to fetch the flag, fainted even before he entered the house.

The fact was that Jong and some other men had hidden themselves in the house beforehand and produced the knocking sound by banging on the floor with a piece of wood.

Why did they frighten us and make us fight against fear? There was a time when I thought it was simply wanton mischief.But now I suppose it was a sort of preparatory training to lead us to the road of struggle. It is well known that all revolutionaries are atheists.

If one is to come to believe in one's own strength one must have the conviction that there is nothing mystic or supernatural in the world, I suppose.

Experiencing several such nights, we came to believe that there were no such things as ghosts. We were proud to be materialists and became bolder, throwing stones to break the police station windows and running away. We also used to throw stones at policemen and their cronies when they were holding drinking parties.

One evening when I came home my aunt asked me about these stone-throwing escapades.

I smiled but did not say a word. At this, she reproached me, her face clouded with worry:

"You little rascal, it is true, isn't it? Why do you behave that way?" At the sound of her raised voice, my uncle looked out of the house at us. When he heard the whole story he rather reproved my aunt. "How can you reproach the boy after hearing what the owner of the confectionery, that cat's-paw of the Japanese, said? If I were him, I would break the windows of her shop as well." He added, "You recently visited Jong Un Gil, I believe. You should visit him more often. There is plenty to learn from him."

Listening to him, the thought came to me again that "my uncle is a really good man." The parents of other boys dissuaded them from calling on Jong, but my uncle was different. In ordinary times he might have dissuaded me, as he was mild-tempered and had the air of a literary man. I wondered why he rather encouraged me to learn from Jong. Perhaps he thought that it was good to implant in me the spirit of uncompromising anti-Japanese struggle.

Encouraged, I became bolder in breaking windows. Of course, Jong encouraged us to do so. I think that it was a good method of fostering the spirit of relentless struggle against Japanese imperialism in us, though mischievious and adventurous acts.

I still sometimes smile to myself at the thought of what we did in those days.

Later our children's activities gradually became organized under the guidance of Jong Un Gil.

Let us take the "A-Frame Carriers' Society" for example. It was a society which the children who used to gather at Jong Un Gil's formed to help poor villagers.

More than 20 of us, with A-frames (for carrying loads) on our backs, used to go up into the mountains to gather firewood and delivered it to the yards of poor villagers. When 25-odd loads of firewood were piled up, although they had been gathered by children, they constituted a considerable amount. The poor and simple people who were deprived of the potatoes they harvested on their slash-and-burn farmland by the

Japanese imperialists and landowners had to eke out an existence on one meal of potato gruel a day. They were always maltreated and slighted. When we brought firewood to them they were at a loss what to say to express their gratitude.

My friends who so readily joined in this activity in those days later became my comrades and embarked on the same road. They included Kim Tok Ryong, Ri Sok Gi and Ri Kyong Mo.

We read in turn *Biographies for Children, Our Friend* and other publications for children in those days to which we subscribed and discussed them eagerly afterwards.

In our village there was a building called "Tochong" where the local people used to gather to talk and relax. Nowadays it would be called a village assembly hall. Jong started an evening school in the place, where he lent various types of publications to children to read and gave them a socialist education. The time we looked forward to all day in those years was the time when we gathered at the evening school. When it grew dark we used to call out to each other to go to the evening school. In a sense it can be said that we lived for that enjoyable time day after day.

The "Wanbaoshan incident", which occurred around that time, is still fresh in my memory.

The Japanese imperialists instigated the "Wanbaoshan incident" with a view to alienating the Korean people from the Chinese people to facilitate their invasion of China and suppress the mounting joint anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples. They roused our indignation by spreading the rumour that Chinese had indiscriminately murdered Koreans in Wanbaoshan in China. At the same time they egged their Korean underlings on to commit terrorism against Chinese people in Korea. Some backward elements, blinded by national chauvinism, fell for this scheme, and one day we heard that the cat's-paws of the Japanese in the village were going to attack the Chinese families in the village with clubs in their hands.

Jong hastily gathered the children together and explained to us the vicious alienation plot of the Japanese. He then urged us to go and protect the Chinese families.

We did so without hesitation.

At the time, we children did not have a clear understanding of that complicated affair but simply believed that all that Jong said and did was right. I still feel that he gave correct guidance. At the time of the "Wanbaoshan incident" it was the Japanese who tried to alienate the Korean people from the Chinese people. But who has divided our nation into the north and the south for over 40 years since liberation and is trying to set

them against each other? In brief, in our history there have been outside forces which have tried to divide our nation but no outside forces which ever intended to promote our national unity. It is lamentable that, nevertheless, there are still flunkeyists in Korea, who try to settle the national question with the help of outside forces.

The First Trial

In the 1930s more than half of the Korean peasants eked out a bare existence by eating pine bark in spring, in the aftermath of the world economic crisis. The workers who lost their jobs in cities owing to the economic disaster streamed back to their native villages, and the number of starving farmers increased day by day.

Moreover, the Japanese intensified their plunder as never before to expedite their invasion of China. They took away hemp, hops and other produce, to say nothing of potatoes, which were the only staple food for the Phungsan people and which they used to exchange for salt or matches.

The farmers, finding it almost impossible to live, often held life-and-death struggles with the police, when they came to collect farm rents and agricultural produce levies. In this fast-changing situation the Korean Communist Party, Korean Peasants' General Association and the like were dissolved or weakened due to suppression by the Japanese imperialists and virtually lost the lead of the peasants' struggle.

In this situation, progressive youths and other people pinned their hopes on the appearance of an organization which could give effective guidance to the struggle.

In my native Phungsan, too, there sprang up various secret groups and their front organizations–associations of youth, children and women.

I, too, became a member of such an organization. It happened as follows: After graduating from the primary school in March 1931 I helped my uncle and aunt in their work, staying at home. In the meantime, I came to be acquainted with Ri Hyon Uk, who taught at a school in Wapho in Chonnam Sub-County. He often visited Phabal-ri, in a horse-drawn cart. So I obtained middle-school readers and Leftist books through him. Ri Hyon Uk was on intimate terms with Comrade Jomg Un Gil. That was why he often came to Phabal-ri.

At around noon one day a friend called on me at home and said that Comrade Jong Un Gil wanted me. That was in August 1931, one year after the Phabal-ri incident. Following him, I went up the hill in front of the

house which overlooked the memorial to "Opasi". There I found Ri Hyon Uk, Sin Jae Guk, and children of about my own age including Kim Tok Ryong gathered there.

Jong Un Gil asked me what I had done with the spent cartridges I had picked up in the police station and told me to fetch them right away. I ran to my house, took them from the wardrobe where I had hidden them and took them to him.

Placing them before us, we formed the "Red Reading Society" (Anti-Japanese Reading Society) led by Jong Un Gil.

We'll fight the Japanese like the guerrillas! That was our vow.

Jong Un Gil was put in charge of the organizations in the county, Ri Hyon Uk of the members in Chonnam Sub-County, Sin Jae Guk of the village people and the organizations in Nunggwi Sub-County, and Jon Chol Sik of the members in Ansu Sub-County. Comrade Jong Un Gil concurrently took charge of the members in Ansan Sub-County.

I was put in charge of the children's section.

The images of those comrades who pledged to keep the secrets of the organization and uphold the great aim, clenching their small fists, on that dark night still appear in my mind's eye.

The "Red Reading Society" openly advocated the elimination of illiteracy and the promotion of enlightenment while secretly circulating Leftist books, newspapers and journals and holding discussion sessions, during which we discussed what we had read. For example: What is socialism? How viciously do landlords and capitalists exploit poor people? And, how should national-liberation struggles be launched in colonies? But we children were more interested in the news about the anti-Japanese struggle in the Changbai region. The "A-Frame Carriers' Society" mentioned above was one of the open organizations expanding the secret bodies under the children's section of the "Red Reading Society".

As far as I knew, the "Red Reading Society" covered a broad region, including many sub-counties of Phungsan County, and Hajigyong-ri, Naejung-ri and Yangphyong-ri. Ri Hyon Uk formed the "Proletarian Study Society" in Chonnam Sub-County and Sin Jae Guk set up the "Proletarian Sports Club" in Phungsan town. These bodies were both under the "Red Reading Society". It goes without saying that all these associations were formed under the powerful influence of the anti-Japanese resistance which was rising in the Changbai area.

Alarmed at this, the Japanese imperialists cracked down with a flurry of arrests in the summer of 1932. This was immediately after the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung declared the beginning of the anti-Japanese

armed struggle by founding the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, I think.

The whirlwind of arrests engulfed my native village as well; over 200 patriots were arrested in Phungsan County alone. It was the biggest event in local history since hunter Hong Pom Do had started the volunteers' struggle by shooting dead the vicious pro-Japanese sub-county head many years previously.

At that time I was only 16 years old. I was not yet ideologically awakened and stayed at home, thinking that these arrests concerned adults only.

But one night six policemen broke in and seized me. They then proceeded to ransack the room. When my uncle protested, "Is this the way for you to behave? What do you blame a mere child for?" they said, "He may be just a child, but he is Red to the marrow!"

With this, they continued searching, pushing my uncle aside.

"Red."

That was what I was called most of the time I was in prison–not my prison number nor my name, I was "Red".

If I had then known beforehand how many hardships were in store for me behind the appellation "Red" they used for the first time instead of the name my parents had given me, how could I have listened with interest and held up my head? I lived for 43 years from then to the August 15 liberation and then since the 1950s under the name which excited terror and hatred in the Japanese and US imperialists and pro-Japanese and pro-US flunkeys and traitors to the nation.Why did I, born as an ordinary son of Korea, have to go through all kinds of hardships almost all my life, being called "Red" instead of my name?

Eventually one of the policemen, who had been carefully looking at the ceiling paper, pierced it and scraped out a hole with his long sword. Immediately books on social science dropped down in a heap.

The police detective was elated and said to my uncle: "What do you have to say for him now?"

My uncle did not dare to protest any more, fearing that the journal of the "A-Frame Carriers' Society" might be discovered. He had buried the journal near the entrance to the outside toilet and put an empty box over the spot, fearing that all the children would be incriminated if it fell into the hands of the police.

In fact, I was more elated than the police detective. I was proud that six policemen had come to arrest me and that those books had shocked them. That proved that I was a revolutionary, didn't it?

My maternal grandmother and aunt wailed and made much ado,

clinging to me as I was being marched away, but I swelled with pride as if I had now become a genuine revolutionary. I squared my shoulders and a smile came over my face.

When I think of that event now, it seems ludicrous, but I am not inclined to blame myself for my childish feelings at that time. The first step in revolution and pride in it, like the first step in life, encourages one to take the next step and helps one to follow the revolutionary road one's whole life, in my opinion.

They took me to the police station the same evening. It was the one whose window panes we children used to break.

I found Jong Un Gil there.

"Are you afraid?" he asked with a smile as soon as the police were not watching us. When I smiled back at him, he encouraged me, saying, "Don't be afraid. You must endure this with complete unconcern."

I nodded vigorously.

About 20 persons had also been arrested in the sub-county administrative centre and more had been caught in neighbouring villages. They were members of the Red Peasants' Union.

Jong Un Gil had had some contacts with the Union, and I had often gone to those people on errands for him. So many of them were familiar to me.

The next morning they put us all in a lorry to transfer us to the Phungsan police station.

When the lorry passed by my mother's old home, my maternal grandmother lay down in the middle of the road and shouted, "Hand over my child!"

For over 30 minutes the policemen struggled with my grandmother before they managed to get her out of the way.

At about noon we arrived at the Phungsan police station and were put into a cell. It had high concrete walls which were speckled with mould. Sunlight seeped in through a small iron grill. There was a chamber pot in a corner. The cell looked utterly dismal, but I felt elated.

The next day the interrogations began. The first investigation of me, the so-called "Red", started.

I could not see Jong Un Gil. He was said to be lying almost paralysed because of harsh torture. I was reminded of his remark, "A revolutionary should not be afraid of such trifling matters." So, when policemen kicked and beat me I ignored the pain and refused to cooperate with their investigation. They seemed to regard me as a tough nut to crack, and shouted at me:

"You Red urchin, do you want to taste the peppered water?"

But I felt proud and elated, as if I had become a full-fledged revolutionary, and answered without fear:

"Administer it to me if you dare. I am not afraid of it."

"You brat!"

A policeman slapped me hard on my cheek. Nevertheless, I glared fiercely back at him. He was perhaps amazed at my stubbornness and threw me back into the cell. I said to myself: "I won!" and felt extremely pleased.

But I did not know how leniently I had been treated compared to the others. In another investigation room Jong Un Gil and the other people of about his age were suffering from harsh torture unimaginable to me.

The police frantically tried to find out who had formed the "Red Reading Society" and other secret organizations, and for almost one and a half months subjected their prisoners to all kinds of torture.

Jong Un Gil and four other comrades involved in the case of the "Red Reading Society", as well as myself, remained in the cell. Jong was charged with setting up the "Red Reading Society", and I was accused of being in charge of its children's section. This was all based on the evidence of the books on social science discovered in my uncle's house. Just before the conclusion of the investigation of our case the underground organization "Proletarian Study Society" in Chonnam Sub-County was exposed, and over 20 persons were arrested. Chonnam Sub-County was adjacent to my native place. The leader of the organization was Ri Hyon Uk.

Later the "Proletarian Sports Club" in Phungsan town was exposed, and over 50 persons, including Sin Jae Guk and Ri Si Ho, were arrested. The cell was too small to accommodate all of them, so they were shackled and locked up in an office. So all those implicated in our case were held together in the same cell.

Many people were also arrested in Nunggwi Sub-County as well. But by that time people were on the alert, and some comrades had the chance to hide or escape. Among them was Ju Pyong Pho, who later became my closest comrade and friend. Later, when we became acquainted with each other, we recalled the affair of that time. I was beside myself with joy because I and dear comrades were confined to the same cell. I was more pleased because I got together with Jong Un Gil.

When Jong Un Gil was thrown back in the cell after being tortured, his face was covered with bruises. But he smiled at me. The smile reminded me of our first meeting in the police station when he had said, "Are you afraid?"

As I was the youngest, I volunteered to take care of the chamber pot

and run errands. Jong Un Gil told me stories and encouraged me. This greatly helped me survive that terrible time.

Even now I shudder at the thought of what happened on December 25. That day was the birthday of the Japanese emperor, and so was a red-letter day for the Japanese. It was also Christmas, the birthday of Christ for the Christians.

So while the other policemen enjoyed a holiday a policeman named Miura was left on duty.

He swaggered along the corridor in front of the cell, now sneering at the prisoners and now idly whistling. Then he took out his revolver from its holster and began to clean it with a piece of cloth.

Then he levelled the revolver at this person and that behind the prison bars and pretended to shoot them.

Then suddenly a shot rang out, and Jong Un Gil, who was right beside me, suddenly fell down dead.

To think that my dear first revolutionary comrade who had opened my eyes to the class struggle and awakened me to the truth of revolution and led me to the road of revolution died in such a manner!

I writhed in agony, hugging his dead body. Not only fellow prisoners in the same cell but also those in the neighbouring cell rose up in protest, clamoring for the police authorities to investigate this cold-blooded murder.

The police tried to hush the matter up, as an accident, but nobody believed it. Jong Un Gil had been the main leader of the secret organization in the Phungsan region. He steadfastly kept organization's secrets and did not waver in his constancy in spite of torture.

They murdered him in such a mean and vicious manner in an attempt to dispose of the core element of the secret underground organizations, terrorise unprepared people and check the expanding revolutionary advance of the youth and other progressive people, I think.

It was the sort of deed the crafty Japanese were fully capable of.

We went on a hunger strike and refused to hand over Jong's body until a coroner's inquest brought the truth to light.

The police said it would take time for a coroner to come from the public procurator's office in Pukchong. But we still refused to yield up the body, weeping before it continually.

Three days later the coroner came and conducted an inquest on the body. Five of us gave evidence, but the coroner remained silent.

We never found out what punishment was meted out to Miura. He might even have been given an official commendation, for that time the Korean people could not even properly lodge a protest against a murder committed by a Japanese.

I went to work with the Party committee of Phungsan County together with our comrades with whom I had been engaged in the children's struggle, immediately after the country was liberated from Japanese imperialism in August 1945.

We often visited Comrade Jong Un Gil's grave, tidied it and planted flowers there. We were sad that his grave was in a desolate mountainous place, and so we decided to move it to the vicinity of the town.

My friends Kim Tok Ryong (chief of the organizational department of the Phungsan County Party Committee), Kim Kyong Mun (chairman of the democratic youth league in Phungsan County), Pak Hung Yun and I moved the grave with the utmost care and paid silent tribute to Jong's memory at the new site.

Recently a woman of around 30 visited me and introduced herself as Jong Un Gil's niece. Listening to her, I stared her in the face, and my eyes dimmed with tears in spite of myself.

If Comrade Jong Un Gil had had sons or daughters he would have had a grandson or granddaughter of her age, I thought. This thought pained me greatly. How many comrades died unnatural deaths in those days!

After the inquest the whole cell was plunged into grief. One day a public procurator called me out.

"How old are you?" he first asked my age. I did not know why.

"Sixteen."

"You rascal, don't you want to suck your mother's milk?"

"Did you call me out to talk such nonsense?" I was in deep grief over Comrade Jong's death, and his absurd remark prompted me to make a blunt retort.

After a pause he again asked, "Don't you want to see your mother?"

"Of course I do."

"Then I will send you to your mother."

I thought this was crazy, but the next day I was really released. There was no knowing what was the reason.

I walked 36 km from the police station to my mother's old home and reached it late at night.

My maternal grandmother and aunt met me at the door, weeping. My uncle patted my shoulder and encouraged me, saying, "You held out admirably."

Some time later I learned why I had bee released so easily.

It was owing mainly to the efforts of Jong Un Gil, who had taken all the blame upon himself and done his best to get the children released.

In the meantime, my uncle had also made great efforts to save me.

He was known as the best calligrapher in Phungsan. So the sub-county office had once asked him to work there as a clerk. But he had declined, saying, "I refuse to serve as a lackey of the Japanese in that place."

But when his cousin, my colleagues and I were arrested, he thought better of it and got transferred from the primary school to the sub-county office, where he altered the records, reducing my age from 16 to 14. Even according to Japanese law, a 14-year-old person was a minor, and could not be prosecuted.

Only then did I realize why the procurator had asked me my age before I was released.

At the news that I had been freed from prison, my mother, who lived in Joksu village, 12 km away, walked all night to my uncle's house.

When my mother announced that she would go to the police station to see me, my uncle is said to have dissuaded her, saying, "The Japanese policemen will poke fun at you, so stay quiet at home. I will settle the matter." Perhaps he feared that the sight of me bruised by torture would pain her too much.

Entering the room, Mother gazed at me vacantly and said not a word. My uncle seemed distressed at this, and admonished her:

"Kye Sun (my mother's name), In Mo is back, released from prison. Why are you standing dumbly like that?"

Only then did Mother say, "O yes," as if awakened from a dream, and promptly hugged me and sobbed.

According to my aunt, while I was being detained, my mother nearly went out of her mind with worry. When harvesting oats in the fields she had simply lain on her face, sickle in hand, while grandfather and uncles all went on cutting oats.

When my uncle had asked her what was wrong, she had looked around and stammered out nonsense like a lunatic:

"My son came, so I was talking to him. Was it a dream? Where did he go? He was just here...."

So my mother stood, staring vacantly at me, doubting whether it was a dream or a fact.

After my release from prison I lay sick in bed for a while, as a result of the harsh prison conditions. This experience was, of course, very hard for a young boy like me. Nevertheless, what prostrated me in bed was the sense of frustration I felt because Jong Un Gil had left my side, dying an unnatural death, and the organization had been destroyed.

The death of comrades and the frustration of the struggle which followed were a really great trial for me, an innocent boy who thought that

the road of revolution was something like a sweet dream full of adventures.

Some time later Comrade Jo Ul Rok returned home, leaving Taesong Middle School in Pukchong in mid-course in order to revive the organization which had been led by Comrade Jong Un Gil. He was my senior, as he had graduated from Phabal Primary School before me.

Under his guidance, while I was recovering from my harsh prison experience, I took part in the restoration of the secret organization. About four months passed before there was another whirlwind of arrests by the Japanese imperialists. I never found out how they got to know about our secret work again.

Comrade Jo Ul Rok hid in the mountains. In those days the Kaema Plateau was covered with slash-and-burn fields, where potatoes were grown. At the edges of the fields there were log cabins where large brass bowls and the like were beaten every night to drive away wild boars. Such a log hut was called a *toddok* in our native place. Comrade Jo Ul Rok was said to have died in a *toddok,* hiding there when the temperature fell to 30 degrees below zero.

I wonder whether he died because he was too hasty in getting away and failed to take matches and food with him.

He was apparently found sitting on the doorstep of the *toddok* with his eyes open and a knife in his hand, just like a living man. I was told this in Hamhung prison, where we had been transferred from Phungsan police station. At that time we were so devastated that we could not even cry at the sad news. This happened in 1933, I suppose.

But, strange to say, I learned from comrades at the Party History Institute that Comrade Jo Ul Rok did not die in 1933 but was murdered while active as a member of the Pukchong region committee of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, which was formed in 1937.

I heard the news from others in Hamhung prison. I wonder whether it was a wrong news.

Now I think that it might have been a false story Comrade Jo Ul Rok invented and spread to help us after we had been arrested. It might also have been a silent instruction to shift all responsibility on to himself.

Sorrow and resentment enabled us to withstand the enemy's tortures and blandishments, and guard our secrets to the end. No one yielded. Many days passed but the Japanese could not make a case against us because of our silence and resistance. Consequently, Comrade Jo Ul Rok's "sacrifice" prevented greater sacrifices and enabled us to be released from Hamhung prison after three months by suspension of the indictment.

I was deeply grieved at the loss of this dear comrade. Our organization had lost a leader and I felt as if I was looking over a vast expanse of sea, aboard a boat which seemed to approach the shore but had then been made to drift back to the ocean, driven by a storm. Only a person who has taken the road of struggle can know how dear the organization is and will understand my feelings at that time.

What to do now? The comrades who had led me were all gone and the organization was destroyed. These great trials clouded my mind in darkness.

The spark the gun report at Phabal-ri had struck in my young mind and the flame Jong Un Gil and the organization had kindled in me were dying. Without recovering the source of that light I felt I could not breathe and did not find life worth living.

I rather missed prison life. At that time, nevertheless, I felt that I must continue to live and struggle.

I entered my young manhood with a sense of frustration.

2. FOLLOWING THE SUNLIGHT

"A Wandering Youth in a Colony"–this is the original title of a chapter in my memoirs published in south Korea. But to be accurate, we were not floating grass drifting along with different ideological trends, since the shots fired at Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng shook the whole country. We kept the *Ten-Point Program of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland* in our hearts when we trod the soil of Phungsan and Pukchong and went to and came back from Seoul and Tokyo.

In Search of the Ranks of Struggle (1)

As mentioned above, I escaped imprisonment, but was not particularly overjoyed. As time went by, a sense of loneliness, of being detached from the ranks of struggle, grew more and more in me.

My uncle seemed to pity me in such a state and suggested that I go to Changbai County and attend the middle school there. A close friend of his taught at the school, so it would be easy for me to enter it, he said.

I hesitated. It seemed to be a better idea to study than to waste time, seized by resentment, having no leader and not knowing what to do. But when I thought it over, I felt that it would be a betrayal of Comrades Jong Un Gil and Jo Ul Rok to take my ease in study. So I did not set out, straight away.

Nevertheless, when I thought of the policemen who had drawn up the blacklist and was keeping me under surveillance, I wanted to go away, anywhere, immediately. I think my uncle advised me to go to Changbai with a view to getting me out of harm's way rather than get me to study.

While I was hesitating I heard the news of the anti-Japanese armed struggle in the border area. To our great joy, the guerrillas were fighting battles almost every day against the Japanese army and police, we were told. The news of the anti-Japanese guerrilla force spread in Phungsan like wildfire, and made me decide to go to Changbai. I told my uncle that I would go to the middle school in Changbai County to study. But I had other plans.

I had heard that the guerrillas had appeared in the Changbai County town, so I thought that if I went there I would be able to contact them. My uncle gladly sent me on my way. I do not know whether he knew of my

ulterior design at that time, but he perhaps guessed it, as he said to me gravely: "Go to your mother and bid good-bye to her before you leave."

I crossed over to Changbai, met my uncle's friend Han Ik, and entered the county middle school without difficulty.

Han Ik suggested that I stay with him, but I declined, under the pretext that I wanted to see the wide world and learn Chinese. I boarded at a Chinese family's house. If I wanted to find the guerrillas I had to be able to move about freely, and if I stayed at a boarding house no one would care where I went or how long I stayed away.

The Japanese acted as outrageously in Changbai as in Korea. They confiscated good land and forests, and oppressed and exploited the poor Chinese and our fellow countrymen alike. If they saw even the slightest sign of anti-Japanese resistance they wielded their swords mercilessly.

Everywhere people suffered from the "punitive" operations of the Japanese who became notorious for their "three-point policy". Suffice it to say that the *Song of the Sea of Blood* about the Korean people's resentment was born in Jiandao. Therefore, in those days Jiandao could be said to be the crucible of the anti-Japanese struggle.

Almost every day I saw, heard and personally felt all these things, and so my hatred of the Japanese grew. I badly wanted to join the anti-Japanese guerrilla force to fight the enemy. Putting everything aside, I used to rush to wherever rumour said the guerrillas were, but each time I returned disappointed.

The rumours about the anti-Japanese guerrillas continued to spread, but they remained a mirage for me.

The following happened in, I think, January 1935:

A unit of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (also called the People's Revolutionary Army of Northeast China) led by Ri Hong Gwang crossed the Amnok River and fought with Japanese guards in Tonghung town, Huchang County (today's Kim Hyong Jik County), North Phyongan Province. The news of this victorious raid was widely reported not only among the people but also in the press.

I went to Tonghung town, but the guerrillas had disappeared. In those days the legendary stories about General Kim Il Sung, the top commander of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, most excited the Korean people. No story could interest and excite them as much as stories about the General did.

There was no end to such stories.

Recently I read the book *Collection of Legendary Stories about Mt. Paektu,* which reminded me of the stories we heard and talked about in those days, and I relived them. If all the legendary stories about the Gen-

eral which circulated in those days were collected, they would perhaps take up dozens of volumes. I used to long to join the guerrillas led by General Kim Il Sung and fight under him. This was the desire and dream of me and all the people of the country who embarked on the road of the anti-Japanese struggle.

Let us return to the old days.

There is a Korean village in Erdaojiang, which is 48 km or 52 km away from the county town. I once went there after hearing that the guerrillas often appeared there.

I used to think that Joksu village where I lived was the most out-of-the-way place. But Erdaojiang was even more remote, being located in a mountainous hinterland. The people's standard of living was miserable beyond description, and their clothes were much more ragged than those of the people in Joksu village.

What impressed me there was the children. When the children in Joksu village met a stranger they did not dare to address him, but gave him a wide berth. Although the children of Erdaojiang were in rags, they had sparkling eyes. Like people elsewhere in Manchuria, the inhabitants of Erdaojiang had left their homeland when they lost their livelihoods and, finding no land to cultivate, drifted to the farthest hinterland. But the expressions in the children's eyes were not dull at all. Their eyes seemed to me to reflect the fierce flame of the armed struggle in Changbai.

But I could get from them not a word about what I wanted to know. They were not impressed by my smart school uniform. They looked at me with sharp eyes as if probing my innermost feelings and simply replied, "I don't know". They must have suspected that I was a spy sent by the Japanese. I became vexed and, at the same time, felt ashamed. I turned back, dispirited.

Nevertheless, I could not give up hope, and one Sunday visited Erdaojiang again. This time I met Ri Chang Son from Phungsan. He came from a village where many believers in the Chondo faith lived and was a member of the "Red Reading Society" in Chonnam Sub-County. I was well acquainted with him because I often met him in those days. He had come to Changbai to escape arrest by the Japanese and was looking for the guerrillas, he said. I was very glad, but both of us knew nothing about the guerrillas except for rumours about them and so could not help each other. We parted, promising to meet again. I met him again several years later when I returned to Phungsan.

I failed to find the guerrillas while I attended the county middle school in Changbai. To make things worse, the police harassed me more. Policemen shadowed me. I don't know whether they had received a blacklist from Phungsan or had got wind of my search for the guerrillas. I

had thought that If I went to Changbai I would be freed, because I would be in a foreign country. But it was a naive thought; the police called on me as often as they had done in the homeland.

I was disappointed at not finding the guerrillas and annoyed by the policemen's shadowing me, when Longjing in Yanji County came into my mind. In those days in Longjing there were quite a few Koreans, many of them from Phungsan. In particular, Jon Chol Sik who had been in charge of the "Red Reading Society" in Ansu Sub-County and Kamtho-ri had fled there to escape arrest by the Japanese and was attending Tonghung Middle School. If I went there, I thought, I could shake off the Japanese police and make contact with the guerrillas. So I went to Longjing.

Longjing in those days was simply one long street along one bank of the Hailan River. I do not know what it is like now. It consisted of small straw-thatched houses, and a cluster of houses roofed with galvanized iron sheets on one side was occupied by Japanese. The Japanese consulate was the only tall building and could be seen from everywhere in the town. When the wind blew the street was covered with yellow dust, and the clatter of the hooves of the horses of the Japanese consulate police was heard thrice a day.

In brief, it was a dull town. Nevertheless, it was the centre of the Yanji region and had several middle schools–Kwangmyong, Taesong, Unjin, Tonghung and others. Tonghung Middle School was attended mostly by poor children. I, too, went there, on the advice of Jon Chol Sik. Also on his advice, I decided to board at a kind-looking man's house.

At that time Jon Chol Sik was in charge of the Old Boys' Association of Tonghung Middle School, and I became a member. The association was on the surface just a friendship organization, but it secretly disseminated anti-Japanese and class consciousness, and socialist ideas among the pupils.

Jon Chol Sik told me about Ju Pyong Pho from Nunggwi Sub-County in Phungsan, who had left the school in mid-course some time before and returned to Phungsan and missed him, saying that he might be congenial to my taste.

Pyong Pho had come to Longjing to escape arrest at the time of the "Red Reading Society" incident. I settled down anyway but was disappointed with the passage of time. Even in Longjing I failed to find any contact leading to the anti-Japanese guerrillas. Moreover, Longjing was not as safe an area as Changbai. I did not know how the Japanese consulate found out that I was in Longjing but I was summoned by them as soon as I had settled down and was subjected to a bothersome investigation as to why I had come there.

Informed of this, Jon Chol Sik was very worried. Moreover, some friends from the Old Boys' Association said, "The consulate police are keeping an eye on you. When we were summoned to the consulate they asked us about you. There are many Japanese secret agents in Longjing. If you are not careful they may do away with you unbeknown to anyone." It was as if I had escaped from a wolf only to meet another fierce wolf. As I was already feeling disappointed I decided to leave Longjing.

Jon Chol Sik also advised me to leave. The consulate policemen looked ominous and delay might incur misfortune, he said. Some days later Jon himself was arrested by the consulate police. I could not hesitate any longer. I hastily left for my native place, promising to pay two months' charge for lodging later. But I failed to pay it due to unforeseen circumstances.

I feel ashamed when I remember the kind-hearted people at the boarding house.

In Search of the Ranks of Struggle (2)

When I returned to Phabal-ri from Longjing I did not make my return known to most of the people I knew to avoid alerting the police. But I quietly called on the comrades with whom I had worked in the former "Red Reading Society".

I met Sin Jae Guk and other comrades without difficulty. They too were distressed at not being able to contact the guerrillas. I travelled to the Samhwa Mine, Susang-ri and other places, to meet my friends and asked them if they had any news about the guerrillas.

One day, almost one month after I had returned from Longjing, Comrade Sin Jae Guk suggested that we go over to Changbai aboard a lorry. We all agreed.

In those days we had an easy way to get to Changbai, as Sin Jae Guk and other comrades worked as drivers for the Phungsan Konghung Company. Pang Ui Sok, known as the "transport king" of Hamgyong Province, operated the company's fleet of lorries.

Pang Ui Sok carried on transactions with landlord Kim Jong Bu of Zhiyangjie in Changbai County. So the lorries of the company often ran to Zhiyangjie and other parts of Changbai County.

I and some other comrades went over to Changbai aboard Sin Jae Guk's lorry. We eagerly inquired about the guerrillas, going to Erdaojiang, Zhiyangjie, Guanfangzi and other places. Then we agreed to settle down

in Changbai and wait for the guerrillas to turn up, instead of going to and fro between there and Phungsan. We feared that the guerrillas might appear in Changbai when we went back to Phungsan.

Thus we took jobs in the Changbai Agricultural Co-operative through the good offices of landlord Kim Jong Bu. I do not remember how we got his recommendation, but I do remember that we heard a rumour that he was generous, even though he was a landlord.

I took a job as a driver's assistant. Of course, the driver was one of my comrades. At that time I felt as if I had grown wings. Now we could travel several 100 km a day, and so would find the guerrillas that much more quickly, I thought. More news of their actions was heard, but we still could not find the guerrillas.

One day an unexpected accident took place. It happened less than one month after we took jobs in the agricultural co-operative. The lorry Comrade Sin Jae Guk was driving overturned. The lorry was badly damaged and one of the puppet Manchukuo soldiers was killed and a dozen others seriously injured. Comrade Sin Jae Guk ascribed it to careless driving. But I wondered whether he deliberately overturned it out of hatred of the puppet Manchukuo troops who were on their way to launch a "punitive" operation against the guerrillas and had forced him to give them a ride.

But I had no time to think it over. Comrade Sin Jae Guk and another comrade were arrested by the military police and we were expelled from the agricultural co-operative. It could not be helped. The military police released Sin and the other man after a few days, and we returned to Phungsan again without finding the guerrillas. Thus our second trip to Changbai ended in failure.

This happened at the close of 1935, I suppose.

Gun Shots in Pochonbo

"Look here, old man."

It was my wife, who was sitting beside me, who addressed me in that manner. When I first returned she called me "Hyon Ok's father" or "Sung Chol's grandfather", but now she simply called me "Old man". When she addresses me that way, I am conscious of the gray hairs on our heads, which we, man and wife, got living separated from each other for long years. But at the same time I have the warm feeling that "This is my home".

Then my wife asked me: "Do you remember this photograph?" showing it to me. I was greatly surprised.

It was a photograph taken together with my comrades who worked at the Hwangsuwon dam construction site in the autumn of 1937.

First on the right in the first row in the photograph was Kim Yu Jin, who once taught music at Tonghung Middle School. I do not clearly remember how and when he came to Phungsan–whether he was arrested together with Jon Chol Sik or came to Phungsan to escape arrest. Anyway I worked together with him at the Hwangsuwon dam construction site.

I was sitting beside him, and beside me sat Jon Chol Sik. He was arrested by the Japanese consulate police in Tonghung Middle School and was transferred to Sinuiju prison. He did not yield in spite of torture; the Japanese even made him walk on a eight-metre-long steel plate with nails protruding from it, but he still told them nothing. Eventually they had to release him. He took much pains to heal the honeycombed wounds in the sole of his feet caused by the nails.

In the photograph there was also my friend Ri Sok Gi. Hearing the news of the Pochonbo battle, all of my comrades at the dam site pledged to fight together with the guerrillas led by General Kim Il Sung.

"Do you recognize this man?"

Straight away I recognized the man at the edge of the photograph whom my wife was pointing to.

"Yes. It is Kimppai (gold-teeth)!"

His real name was Ri Chang Son. I met him in Erdaojiang in Changbai County. His gold-crowned teeth impressed us. So we called him by the nickname "Kimppai" rather than by his name.

"By the way, how did you get hold of this photograph?" I asked.

It came from the Party History Institute, she said. Pointing at the three persons in the photograph, she said that they were political workers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army sent to the homeland on the instructions of General Kim Il Sung. As for "Kimppai", I, too, at that time already knew that he was a political worker sent to the homeland. In 1937, when I met him again after parting with him in Erdaojiang, he was a member of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

The year 1937!

When I saw the photograph I was overwhelmed with emotion.

I started working at the Hwangsuwon dam construction site in the spring of 1936, after I had been driven from Changbai. The dam construction was part of the Hochongang power station project the Japanese undertook with a view to turning Korea into a supply base for the invasion of the continent. At that time it was called the "Sujon (paddy-field) project".

Having got a foothold at the dam construction site, I told Kim Tok Ryong to set up a tailor's shop. He was adroit, gifted and good at everything he turned his hand to. He was a good comrade who carried out any assignment without hesitation and without complaint. And so he set up the "Singwang Tailor's Shop". He did garment cutting handily on his own. I have no idea when or where he learned the skill.

I took charge of orders for suits at the shop while working as a day labourer at the construction site, and for a while I worked handing out work assignment chits for the morning shift. With these three functions I found it easy to meet comrades and look for new comrades.

News of the victories scored by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was heard every day in the Changbai area across the Amnok River, as well as news of strikes and disputes taking place ceaselessly in the homeland. In history this time is called the "period of the great upsurge of the Korean revolution".

Such news became known unusually quickly at the dam construction site. When the Japanese were crushed in a battle somewhere, to our great joy, the next day the news was already known all over the construction site. I think that this was because at the site there were several political workers sent to the homeland by the General.

At the time Kim Tok Ryong once whispered to me: "In Mo, don't you think that these people are guerrillas?"

At that time at the construction site there were some people who gathered from different parts of the country. All of them worked there to earn some money and return to their native places after wandering about in search of a livelihood. Yet some of them knew a lot about the situation in the country, and attracted attention with their stories about how the Japanese were being hit hard by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and about the legendary deeds of General Kim Il Sung. They were political workers sent to the homeland by the General. Ri Chang Son was one of them.

I learned about him in the great leader's reminiscences *With the Century,* which I read after I returned. I regret that he was sacrificed without seeing the day of liberation.

We heard the news of the Pochonbo battle on the morning of June 5, the day after it had taken place.

On that day the Japanese overseers and policemen, who used to swagger about on normal days, did not appear. We did not know the reason for this until the news of the Pochonbo battle reached us.

"General Kim Il Sung has attacked Pochonbo! All the Japanese establishments there have been reduced to ashes!"

"General Kim Il Sung personally delivered an address. He said that the Japanese would be soon defeated and Korea whould be independent!"

"The General has declared war on Japan!"

Newspapers, too, gave wide publicity to the incident. Wherever people gathered they talked about nothing else. Then we heard that the Japanese soldiers who had pursued the guerrillas had suffered heavy casualties.

"To be sure! How they dared!" people said.

The Jiansanfeng battle was fought on June 30. The Japanese 74th Division stationed in Hamhung, which had left with the Japanese flag flying aloft after holding a pompous ceremony, was utterly routed. Many Japanese military lorries were seen roaring toward Hamhung along the road passing Phungsan. People whispered they carried the heads of the Japanese soldiers who had been killed at Jiansanfeng.

If the gun shots which rang out in Phabal-ri on August 14, 1930, planted the seed of struggle in my young chest, the gunshots at Pochonbo on June 4, 1937, kindled an eternal flame of struggle in my chest as I reached young manhood. Those decided my fate.

When I look back on those days I am suddenly seized with an idea to ask the historians in south Korea who write about the anti-Japanese struggle of our nation: Is there a struggle to be prouder of than the anti-Japanese armed struggle of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the history of our people's anti-Japanese struggle? Did Japan's mighty Kwantung Army desperately search the vast forests and snow-covered fields to capture the "ministers" of the "Shanghai Provisional Government" or patriots who concerned themselves only about getting help from foreign forces? The huge Kwantung Army was engaged in a full-scale war against the Korean guerrillas in those days.

However, south Korean historians ignore this heroic resistance in the history of the anti-Japanese struggle of our nation or loudly praise minor anti-Japanese actions while referring to the anti-Japanese war in only a few lines, as if it is not worth mentioning. Thus they play into the hands of the Japanese who are impudent enough to argue that Japan and Korea were not warring parties but a suzerain country and a colony, respectively.

I wonder if they still do not know or pretend not to know that the Japanese themselves said in distress that "General Kim Il Sung has emerged as a saviour of the Korean nation."

A Japanese school supervisor once wrote that before liberation he asked the pupils of a primary school in Korea to write down, without signing their names, the name of the person whom they regarded as their

greatest hero. To his surprise, more than 70 percent of them wrote "General Kim Il Sung".

When I look back on those days, the following thought occurs to me: If at that time the Korean people had been given the liberty to speak their minds without worries for even a few minutes they would have unanimously cried, "Long live General Kim Il Sung!", "Long live the independence of Korea!"

General Kim Il Sung was the symbol of the strength and unbreakable spirit of the Korean nation, the beacon, the hope and the sun of Korean independence!

This became my firm belief and faith.

The Rays of the Rising Sun

July 1937 was a watershed in the activities of the anti-Japanese organizations in the Phungsan region. The news of Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng thrilled everyone. At that time a political worker of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army sent by General Kim Il Sung personally came to the Phungsan area. The joy I felt at that time is indescribable. Won Chung Hi, head of the Chondo faith congregation in the village where nearly everyone was a follower of that religion, introduced him as the "special envoy of General Kim Il Sung".

One evening in mid-July I had had supper together with my uncle and aunt after returning from the dam construction site and we were talking about different matters. As it was a market day, there were lots of people on the road even in the evening.

Phabal-ri market was held six times a month. On market day people flocked to the marketplace from all over the region and crowded into the village. Our home was fortunately on the outskirts of the village, and so it was not so noisy in our vicinity.

As the noise of people began to die away a voice from outside called, "Is the master at home?" Opening the door, my uncle looked out and said with delight: "So it's you, Chang Son!" I too got up and looked out. It really was "Kimppai"–Ri Chang Son!

With a cursory greeting, he glanced around the house. He said that he had brought an esteemed guest with him, and asked if they could drop in. Of course, I and my uncle gladly complied with his request.

Ri Chang Son asked us to wait and went out to the highway. After a good while, he came back with a woman in her twenties. She was dressed like an ordinary market person, but looked dignified. Her unusu-

ally bright eyes were impressive. Her voice was clear and her expression was full of conviction. Her manner was quiet and full of vigor, as if she could cover several hundred kilometres at a breath.

My uncle and aunt went out, and I and Ri Chang Son sat opposite the stranger in the back room.

She said that she had come to know about me and my uncle through Ri Chang Son, and asked me about the "Red Reading Society" case and our struggle. I felt that she was an unusual woman.

I told her about the struggle during the period from the time of the reading society till then, and about the Hwangsuwon dam construction site and the situation in Ansan and Ansu sub-counties.

Saying that underground work is as important as joining the guerrillas and fighting with guns, she pointed to the need to rally workers, peasants, and youth and students around those who had been involved in the reading society.

What most excited us was the news of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland (ARF) founded by General Kim Il Sung and the contents of the *Inaugural Declaration of the ARF* and the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* drawn up by the General, which she explained.

When I now re-read the *Inaugural Declaration of the ARF,* almost 60 years later, the impassioned voice in which she explained it seems to still ring in my ears:

"If we, the 20 million people of our nation, men and women, old and young without discrimination, are united and fully enlisted in the struggle for the anti-Japanese national liberation, with the people with money donating money, the people with food giving food, and skilled and wise people using their skill and wisdom, the Japanese will be ruined and our nation will win liberation and independence."

After a while she left the house and went away on a lorry which seemed to have been waiting for her by the highway. I think it belonged to the Pukchong Konghung Company. One man and one woman, who seemed to have been on the lookout outside, leaped onto the back of the lorry when it started off. It went in the direction of Kapsan.

My uncle who had been to the police station after a discussion with Ri Chang Son returned. There he had played Korean checkers with the policemen, while keeping an eye on their movements.

When I met Ri Chang Son again several days later I asked him who the woman was. He only said, "She is a political worker sent by General Kim Il Sung." I was surprised and excited at hearing this. I reproached him, saying, "Why did you not tell me at the time?" He replied indignantly: "You know that we must keep underground work as secret as possible,

don't you?" He then told me to make no more reference to the matter.

I retorted, "If I had known that she was a political worker sent by the General personally I would have followed her by all means. I missed a good opportunity because you did not tell me who she was." Ri Chang Son reasoned with me: "The political worker said that underground work is as important as joining the guerrillas and fighting with guns, didn't she? We must do as she told us, because she was telling us what the General wants us to do. Anyone who refuses to follow the General's instructions is not qualified to be a member of the organization." I felt abashed at this.

Nevertheless, I was beside myself with joy at having met a political worker sent by the General who was still a legend to me.

Whenever Ri Chang Son met me after that he explained to me the contents of the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* point by point, and kept me informed of the struggles of the guerrillas. I once asked him if he had met General Kim Il Sung. He remained silent. Of course, at that time I did not think that he had met the General, but when I read recently the leader's reminiscences *With the Century,* I learned that Ri Chang Son had been a member of the unit led by the General. If I had only known this at that time...!

What happened around September, about one month after that, is even more unforgettable.

One day "Kimppai" Ri Chang Son whom I had not seen for some time, appeared at the dam construction site together with a number of strangers. One of them was a tall young man. He talked to us about different matters as he worked together with us. He asked us about our lives and the situation at the construction site, offering us cigarettes. He spoke in a plain and easy manner.

He also told us of the activities of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, and suggested that we all fight together against the Japanese and meet again after national liberation. His bright eyes, sonorous voice and dimpled smile were unusually impressive.

At that time we did not know who he was. But seeing Ri Chang Son and some other strange workers who looked on from a distance and kept a close watch on the vicinity, I thought he must be an unusual man. When I saw the General's photograph in the newspaper for the first time after liberation I realized who the young man was. I could hardly believe my eyes.

At that time the General had gone to the secret camp in the Sinhung region, deep in the homeland, and stopped in the Phungsan region, guided by Ri Chang Son, to work among the organizations of the ARF and Chondo faith believers, I was told.

This shows that the rumour widely circulated at that time that "General Kim Il Sung went to Hamhung, had his hair cut and stayed overnight at an inn", was not ill-founded.

That time was the "period of upsurge of the Korean revolution." News of victories by the guerrillas reached us every day, and the Japanese were in a panic. Our activity, too, got into their stride. The organization expanded daily and assistance to the guerrillas was rendered on a large scale. Shoes, cotton cloth, matches, salt and other materials were obtained and sent to Sinpha (today's Kim Jong Suk County) whence they were conveyed to the guerrillas across the Amnok River, I was told. Acquisition of assistance materials was called an activity of the production guerrillas. When we heard the news of victories by the guerrillas we simply did not know what it meant to be tired, being only too grateful that our efforts were helping them.

Assistance to the guerrillas was usually rendered on a small scale, but at times it could reach a very big scale. A lorry laden with assistance materials once came from Pukchong and went in the direction of Sinpha, blowing its horn as it passed us. Laden with logs, it returned several days later and went back to Pukchong. The assistance materials had been conveyed safely to the guerrillas through Sinpha and across the river.

Supplies were ceaselessly conveyed to the guerrillas, carried on a man's back, by cart, raft and lorry.

In the meantime, we made vigorous preparations to form organizations of the ARF. One of them was the Friendship Society of Workers of the Hwangsuwon Dam Construction Site, which was formed under the guidance of Ri Chang Son after the woman political worker left. The friendship society was joined by Jon Chol Sik, Kim Yu Jin, Kim Tok Ryong, Ri Sok Gi and Ri Kyong Mo. At Ri Chang Son's insistance, I was put in charge of the society, but in reality Ri Chang Son virtually led it. Errands requiring long-distance travelling were nearly all carried out by Kim Tok Ryong and Ri Kyong Mo. The former was a particularly good walker and good at anything. I believed him as myself.

The "Hyesan incident", which caused a worldwide sensation, happened near the end of 1937. At that time the friendship society was expanding and was on the way to becoming an organization of the ARF.

Many people were arrested in Phungsan in connection with this incident, most of them believers in the Chondo faith. Pak In Jin, head of the Chondo community in South Hamgyong Province, and Ri Hyon Uk, my senior at school, were among those arrested.

The friendship society of workers was a lawful organization but had to

suspend its activities for the time being and go underground because of fierce oppression by the Japanese.

This was another setback, but we believed that as long as we had the *Ten-Point Program* as the guideline of struggle and the General leading us, we would definitely win.

Ju Pyong Pho

One day a tall and vigorous young man called on me and asked, "Are you Ri In Mo?" This must have been in December 1937. When I replied in the affirmative, he related that Comrade Sin Jae Guk had told him: "Go to Phabal-ri and call on a youth called Ri In Mo, whose temperament is like mine." His somewhat protruding eyes glistened with ardour, and when he spoke his even rows of teeth attracted attention. At first glance I liked him.

He was Ju Pyong Pho, and he became my closest friend and comrade.

At that time he was on the run from the police as a result of "Jo policeman incident" in which he had beaten a policeman named Jo Thae Je.

Jo Thae Je was a very wicked fellow. He used to beat people without reason, and so was called "Jo the cudgel". He was a martial arts expert, and so whenever anyone said, "Jo the cudgel is coming!" not only adults but also children fled. One day, as he was bullying people in front of the Pukilu Restaurant, Ju Pyong Pho knocked him down with his fist. Ju had long practised hitting a punchback stuffed with hard millet so his fist was unusually powerful. Later I heard from people that Jo was as good as half dead, but Ju Pyong Pho said that he had only given him one blow. He was arrested, walked off to the Nupphyong police station and interrogated for several days before being released. But he was liable to be arrested again on one pretext or another in the aftermath of the "Hyesan incident", and so Comrade Sin Jae Guk sent him to my house in Phabal-ri to hide.

When my mother learned what the matter was, she sighed and said, "Both of you have the same temperament." That reminded me of what had happened some time before.

The whole story is as follows:

One day a child came running to me, his nose bleeding and his face bruised. His Japanese teacher had called the child into his room and beaten and kicked him because the child had spoken Korean.

I could not repress my anger. To think that a Korean child could be beaten like that just because he had spoken Korean! I immediately put on

a Korean jacket and trousers and went running to the school. I called out the Japanese teacher Tani, and he came running out with a wooden sword in his hand. I wrested the wooden sword from his grasp and began to strike him with it. I was angered more and more at the thought that the wooden sword was used to beat Korean children mercilessly. I beat him till he acknowledged himself in the wrong and begged me to stop, rubbing his two hands. I was summoned to the police station on account of that, and later had to go into hiding.

Pyong Pho laughed heartily at my story. My mother's remark, as well as Sin Jae Guk's observation, was remarkably astute, he said.

Talking to him, I found that he and I were comrades who had worked in the same organization from the time of the "Red Reading Society". I regretted that I had not met him before. We positively promised to fight together without parting from each other again. Of course, this was not a promise made out of mere friendship but that of revolutionary comrades.

He stayed with us for several days before leaving for Seoul to live beyond the surveillance of the police.

When he came back after some time he said that he was attending a law school in Seoul. But he came to Phungsan almost every month. He often wrote to me, and I often went to Seoul to meet him.

On his trips to and from Seoul he became acquainted with many pioneers of the communist movement in the country. But it did not seem to me that his acquaintance with them gave him much joy. His thoughts were focussed on the struggle in Phungsan and the anti-Japanese guerrillas. The next time he met the political worker of the guerrilla force he would join the guerrillas by all means, he said.

We had the same ambition.

When I went to Seoul I stayed at his lodgings. When he came to Phungsan he stayed more often at my uncle's house than at his own home in Munjophyong-ri, Nunggwi Sub-County.

At such times we talked through the night about the organizations which had been wrecked or had gone underground following the "Hyesan incident" and about the anti-Japanese guerrillas. Sometimes we raised our voices and pounded the floor, and sometimes we laughed. On those nights we were frustrated owing to our failure to expand the underground organization and fight.

I Meet the Woman Political Worker Again

In early July 1938 I received a summons from Comrade Sin Jae Guk

and hastily went to his home. At that time he lived with his mother in Huryong-dong in Ripha-ri, while working at the local office in Ripha-ri of the Phungsan transportation agency.

Comrade Ri Hyon Uk came some time after I arrived at Sin Jae Guk's house. He visited us on his release from Hyesan police station after being detained for six months.

He was released from prison owing to the self-sacrifice of Kwon Yong Byok, Ri Je Sun and other arrested comrades, who took all the blame upon themselves with a view to restoring the wrecked organizations as early as practicable.

Comrade Ri Hyon Uk's health was poor owing to six months of torture. But, pointing out the need to restore the organizations as soon as possible and make preparations to meet General Kim Il Sung upon his pending advance to the homeland, he explained to us the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* item by item.

I had already heard the details of the program from the woman political worker and Ri Chang Son whom I had met the previous year.

Comrade Ri Hyon Uk dwelled at length on how to form organizations and how to rally many people behind them. He spoke so coherently and convincingly that he seemed to have attended an underground worker training school for six months instead of being shut up in jail.

That day we named our organization the "Phungsan Region Revolutionary Committee" and divided our zone of operation into three parts. Sin Jae Guk took charge of the east region, myself, the west region and Comrade Ri Hyon Uk, the south region. Comrade Ri Hyon Uk took the restoration of the Phungsan underground organization upon himself.

In the evening we painstakingly copied the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* (We called it "our slogan") on rice paper that Comrade Ri Hyon Uk gave us.

I carried a copy of the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* with me from that time till the day of national liberation.

I also took it with me when I went to Seoul and Tokyo.

The west region I took charge of consisted of Ansan Sub-County and Ansu Sub-County. Ansan Sub-County comprised five ri–Jigyong-ri, Sangjigyong-ri, Naejung-ri, Yangphyong-ri and Phabal-ri–while Ansu Sub-County consisted of six ri–Mijon-ri, Kamtho-ri, Sudong-ri, Jangphyong-ri, Phyongsan-ri and Susang-ri.

After the restoration of the underground organization we conducted vigorous activities to form subsidiary organizations.

These organizations expanded rapidly. In the west region placed in my charge the Phabal branch of the ARF was formed in September that

year, and around that time the "Shock Brigade of Workers at the Hwangsuwon Dam" was organized at the Hwangsuwon dam construction site. The core elements of the shock brigade were the members of the workers' friendship society formed under the influence of Ri Chang Son after the woman political worker had visited in July the previous year. The foundation ceremony of the organization was held at the Singwang Tailor's Shop set up by Kim Tok Ryong. The latter and Ri Kyong Mo were placed in charge of liaison work. The shock brigade was mainly engaged in different activities to sabotage the Hwangsuwon dam, which was intended to provide wartime power for the Japanese imperialists and for their hydroelectric power station project in Naejung-ri. At that time accidents, big and small, took place one after another at the power station construction site, which gave the Japanese constant headaches. Most of these actions were taken by the workers' shock brigade. They obtained materials for the guerrillas and, at the same time, made swords and spears in secret in preparation for joining the guerrillas when the General advanced into the homeland.

Around that time in Kunbat Valley in Roun-ri, Ansan Sub-County was formed the "Ansan-Huchi Pass Production Shock Brigade", which monitored the enemy's movements along the Pukchong-Hyesan, Pukchong-Samsu and other major military roads. At the same time they obtained funds for the guerrillas and for the underground organizations by selling firewood and charcoal around Huchi Pass.

In the east and south regions, too, the secret organizations expanded continuously. This success was achieved after the meeting with the political worker sent by the General in September 1938, which will be referred to later.

Returning home one September day when I was busy with organization work, I found a message waiting for me telling me to go to the Yangchun Surgery in Huryong-dong, Ripha-ri, by the evening of the next day. I wondered whether this had something to do with Ju Pyong Pho.

Ju Pyong Pho had arrived from Seoul a few days previously. Calling on me, he said that he could not hesitate any more and was going to join the guerrillas. I guessed that he had told Ri Hyon Uk or Sin Jae Guk of his decision. When he met me he was as excited as if he were on the point of joining the guerrillas immediately. He was the sort of person who would impetuously rush off to do whatever he wanted to do. Once, when we were attending primary school, a circus troupe visited Phungsan. Ju Pyong Pho became infatuated with the circus and followed it for a whole month, hoping to join it.

Still vivid in my memory is the image of him sitting down and speaking

excitedly while shaking his knees. When seated, he habitually shook his knees.

I made a firm determination to join the guerrillas at any cost if he joined them.

But Ju had been arrested as soon as he arrived in Phungsan this time.

Early the next morning I set off for the Yangchun Surgery.

Dr. Kim, the director of the surgery, was a member of the branch of the ARF in Huryong-dong, and his house was the liaison office for our revolutionary committee.

When I reached the liaison office Comrade Ri Hyon Uk and Comrade Sin Jae Guk were already there. They told me to wait, without informing me what the matter was. I grew impatient. After a while they told me that a political worker of the guerrilla force sent by the General would soon arrive.

I was exhilarated by this good news. Did not the sending of a political worker mean that General Kim Il Sung knew about our Phungsan organization work? It seemed like a dream.

Some time later the woman political worker I had met the previous year entered the room, accompanied by two guerrillas (one of them was a woman). I felt a surge of joy.

Acquainting herself with our organization work, she indicated basic directions for our future work. She particularly stressed the General's plan of rallying the dispersed communists by sending organizers to south Korea, including Seoul.

That day she met Comrade Sin Jae Guk separately. I asked Sin why on my way back home, and he said, "We talked about Ju Pyong Pho". Ju later informed me that she had appointed him a member of the Phungsan Revolutionary Committee.

Two or three days later Ju Pyong Pho suddenly turned up at my uncle's house. He had been released from the police station a few days previously, and he intended to go to Seoul again, he said, but he said nothing about joining the guerrillas. He suggested that we communicate by letter from then on, as he could not afford to keep travelling between Seoul and Phungsan. Only then did I come to form an idea of what had happened. I asked him directly: "You have received instructions from the woman political worker, haven't you?" He nodded and smiled. He also knew that I, too, had met her. I learned from him that she had stayed in Yangji village in Munjophyong-ri, where Ju lived, when she had come to Phungsan in August the previous year, and that this time, too, she had visited his home, meeting him by chance just as he was released from

the police station. This meeting induced Pyong Pho to decide to go back to Seoul. Instead of joining the guerrillas he undertook underground political work to rally communists in the homeland behind General Kim Il Sung.

My mother regretted more than anyone else that he could not afford to come back from Seoul more often. My mother liked Pyong Pho, who was sociable and free-and-easy, and always called him her "son".

Sometimes there would be a knock on the door at the dead of night while she was alone. My mother would call out, "Who's there?"

When she heard the answer, "Your son has come", she would open the door gladly, saying, "Oh, it's you, Pyong Pho!"

When Pyong Pho left she would accompany him sadly to the outskirts of the village. I wonder if she had a premonition that some day I would follow him.

Two months later I received a letter from him telling me that he needed someone to work with him. He seemed to be very busy.

Comrade Ri Hyon Uk told me to go to Seoul to help Ju Pyong Pho and receive directions from him, since this was one of the tasks the woman political worker had given to the organization in Phungsan.

I went to Seoul immediately after New Year's Day 1939.

"Old man, do you know who that woman political worker was who went to Phungsan at that time?" my wife asked not so long ago.

"It was the General's special envoy," I answered without hesitation.

She shook her head.

"Read this," she said.

She handed me a copy of the newspaper *Rodong Sinmun*. It was dated May 29, 1991, and on its second page was an article by Pak Jong Suk and Wi In Chan. It was titled, "Recalling the Days When the East Coast Was Consolidated as a Bulwark of Anti-Japanese Revolution". The article took up the whole page.

I started reading aloud: "Many commanding officers and political workers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army were sent to the frontier area and into the homeland from the Donggang secret camp in the primeval forest on Mt. Paektu in May 55 years ago, in order to expand and develop the ARF movement deep into the homeland.

"Comrade Kim Jong Suk, the indomitable communist revolutionary fighter who advanced deep into the homeland in July and August 1937 in pursuance of the respected leader's far-sighted plan...."

I turned my surprised eyes to my wife. She urged me to go on reading.

"In early July Comrade Kim Jong Suk crossed the Amnok River, lead-

ing our party. ... Entering the Phungsan region, she found Comrade Ri Chang Son, who was the first guerrilla from among the believers in the Chondo faith, waiting for her.

"Comrade Kim Jong Suk first conducted work to expand the organization of the ARF among the believers in the Chondo religion in Phungsan County, an important place linking the secret bases in the Mt. Paektu region with the east coast. Won Chung Hi, head of the Chondo community, met her, the special envoy of General Kim Il Sung.

"The next day Comrade Kim Jong Suk met the person in charge of the Phungsan branch of the ARF and other members of the organization..."

The article went on to describe how Comrade Kim Jong Suk had gone to Tanchon and met Ri Ju Yon, who was convalescing in a temple in Todok Valley. He had fallen ill while in prison following the peasants' revolt in Tanchon. She also met Ri Yong, the son of Ri Jun, who had been a special envoy to The Hague, in the coastal town of Chaho. He was under house arrest at the time. Comrade Kim Jong Suk then contacted Ri Yong, the person other than the above-mentioned, who was involved with the Communist Party of Korea, in Pukchong. Later Ri Yong went to Seoul to form the "Steel Corps" and conveyed the leader's revolutionary ideas to the people involved in the communist movement there.

I knew that Ri Yong was connected with the work which Ju Pyong Pho was doing together with Comrade Kim, the main leader of the communist movement in Seoul at that time.

This was no coincidence; it was because everything was accomplished in accordance with the organizational line laid down by Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

The writers of the article cited the following remark of the great leader Kim Il Sung relating to those days:

"Comrade Kim Jong Suk too led revolutionary organizations, going to Phungsan in the summer of 1937 and again in 1938, taking Comrade Kim Pong Sok, my orderly, with her. At one time Comrade Kim Jong Suk was guided in the Phungsan region by Ri Chang Son, who was nicknamed 'Kimppai'."

There was no longer any room for doubt....

At that time Ju Pyong Pho could hardly have guessed that the woman political worker who met him and gave him assignments was a woman guerrilla general whose name was a legend among people throughout the country, or that his course of struggle was steered in accordance with the organizational line laid down by her. The same was the case with myself and all the other members of our organization.

We carried in our breasts General Kim Il Sung's *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* she had given us, and boasted of being soldiers of General Kim Il Sung at all times and in all places.

We represented the rays of a great sun spreading over the country.

From Seoul to Tokyo

When I arrived in Seoul, Ju Pyong Pho was enrolled in the Kyongsong Law School and lived in lodgings in Chungsin-dong, Tongdaemun District. But he was enrolled in the law school only as a cover, and was active together with Comrade Kim from Seoul Communist Group among workers in the Seoul area and particularly in the Yongdungpho District.

Around that time in Seoul efforts were concentrated on stepping up the revolutionary trade union movement in accordance with the thesis of the International Red Trade Union published in September 1930.

The original Communist Party of Korea, which was comprised of petty bourgeois intellectuals, had been dissolved in 1928 as a result of suppression by the Japanese imperialists and bitter factional strife. So the revolutionary trade union movement in the 1930s was launched under the guidance of different underground communist circles. Among them the group led by Comrade Kim formed cells in factories in the Seoul area and on the Inchon docks in cooperation with Kwon Yong Thae, a graduate of Moscow's Communist University, who returned to Seoul in 1933. This group could be said to be the predecessor of the Seoul Communist Group. With formation of cells in factories they systematized them according to trade.

But the group was exposed during the strike at the Jongyon Textile Factory in the autumn of 1933, and more than 400 of its members, including Comrade Kim and Kwon Yong Thae, its masterminds, were arrested. Later the organization was resurrected, but was smashed in a series of arrests in 1935.

Comrade Kim, who was released from prison in 1937, read an article on the might of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army led by General Kim Il Sung in the monthly *Pacific* published by the Comintern in the spring of that year.

He heard the news of the Pochonbo battle when he was in Chungju, his native place, convalescing from illness he had contracted in prison. When a group of progressive persons gathered in the Pyonibok barber's shop in the marketplace and the subject of who was the best man in Korea was brought up in conversation, Comrade Kim said without hesita-

tion: "The best man in Korea is General Kim Il Sung, who raided Pochonbo," I was told.

Ju Pyong Pho excitedly told me this story, which he said he had heard from Ri Ki Hwan, who was from his hometown and was engaged in the youth movement. He informed me that Comrade Kim had immediately gone to Seoul and formed the Seoul Communist Group and conducted vigorous activities.

Judging by the story about Comrade Kim, Pyong Pho's work seemed to be progressing successfully. I was curious about many things, but I refrained from asking any questions because they concerned underground work. Anyhow, learning of Comrade Kim's attitude toward General Kim Il Sung, I came to respect Comrade Kim.

I wanted to set to work immediately. Ju Pyong Pho told me not to be too curious, because it was underground work.

But I did not like the liaison man whom he made me contact. This man hailed from my hometown. His father was Jo Jae Ok, who was a colleague of Pang Ui Sok in the haulage business.

He had attended Pukgyongsong Middle School in North Hamgyong Province while our comrades were engaged in struggle although they were still very young.

He was the son of a capitalist who always mingled with the Japanese imperialists. I had only unpleasant memories of him swaggering about and putting on airs when he returned home during the summer vacations. Moreover, after graduation from Kyongsong Law School he worked as a journalist for the society page of the government-general's organ, *Maeil Sinmun*. The head of that newspaper was the pro-Japanese lackey Choe Rin.

I resented the fact that I was made to contact a person who was more a target of struggle than a comrade. But I could not complain openly, and as it concerned underground arrangements I had not the least idea of what progress he had made over the previous years, or what he was then engaged in and in what sector. So I was in no position to say anything. Finally I complained to Pyong Pho, telling him that I would rather go to Tokyo to study instead of staying in Seoul.

To my surprise, he said that I should indeed go to Tokyo and establish contacts with the self-supporting students there hailing from Phungsan. In Tokyo there were several friends of my early days who were working their way through school, and I wrote to them asking them to help me.

However, there was a problem: I had to apply for a passport in my hometown, which I had left secretly to escape surveillance by the police. With my name on a blacklist, it was hardly likely that I would be allowed a

passport to leave the country even if I went back home and applied for one.

In the midst of this dilemma I received a reply letter from one of my friends in Tokyo, who said that he would come to take me back with him.

About one month later he arrived in Seoul, bringing with him a passport, attached to which was a photograph of a bespectacled young man (at that time I always wore spectacles). He also brought with him a fake identification card making me out to be a student at the Tokyo School of Commerce.

My aim in going to Tokyo was to form an organization of the ARF in Japan among the self-supporting students from Phungsan with whom I had contact already. Besides, at that time the Japanese had started large-scale arrests of people implicated in communist organizations in Korea, so I was anxious to keep out of the way for a while.

I changed into the school uniform my friend brought, putting in my inside pocket the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* written in small characters on rice paper.

I left for Tokyo after asking Pyong Pho to tell my uncle and aunt what I was doing.

The journey by ferry across to Japan and by train from Shimonoseki to Tokyo passed uneventfully; the Japanese police checked my friend twice, but took no notice of me. But as soon as I got off the train at Tokyo Railway Station my friend disappeared, together with other students who had come to meet us. I was seized with panic. But fortunately I had an envelope with the address of the place I was supposed to stay. Asking directions the whole time, I took a train to Ueno Station and changed to a train to Kameare Station. Finally I found the apartment.

The owner of the house showed me into a room, where I waited for about an hour. Eventually my friends trooped in, laughing. They had deliberately played a trick on me to get me used to finding my own way around the streets of Tokyo!

Finding that I called at their apartment, they dropped in at a nearby tea house and deliberately spent time, I was told.

Together with myself in the apartment were Pak Kyong Sop, Ri Si Ho and Kim Yong Gyo. The latter was some eight years younger than I, but in the course of one or two years he became a fully fledged adult.

Phungsan Natives In Tokyo

The students from Phungsan in Tokyo formed the "Phung-u Friendship Society of Self-Supporting Students in Tokyo". I soon learned that all

its members did was to get together from time to time and complain about Japanese imperialism. I asked them, "Did you form this organization to help you in your studies? You should do your bit for your country even here in Japan, shouldn't you? Do you know how hard our comrades in the homeland are fighting?" With this I produced the *Inaugural Declaration of the ARF* and the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF.*

At this, the others grew animated and were eager to look at these documents.

That evening we talked until late about what we should do in the future. They were all very enthusiastic, saying excitedly that with the "slogan of the ARF" alone all the Koreans in Japan could be united. That night we outlined how to develop the friendship society into an organization of the ARF. From then on they began to look for other comrades to recruit, and the Phung-u Friendship Society began to publicize the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* among the self-supporting Korean students. This was the first step in forming the organization of the ARF headed by General Kim Il Sung in Japan.

I enrolled at the Tokyo Higher Industrial School after passing a stiff examination. But as soon as I received my student's identification card, which was a convenient disguise, I did not attend the school any more. When my comrades seemed to have grasped the spirit of the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF,* I reorganized the friendship society into an organization of the ARF with their enthusiastic approval. The name of the organization was left as the Phung-u Friendship Society of Self-Supporting Students in Tokyo.

The society then went on to establish contacts with a group of Korean self-supporting students living in the Shinjuku area, and inspired them with national and class consciousness. At the same time, it contacted girl students through Ri Si Ho's sister, Ri Kum Dan, who took it upon herself to do cooking and washing for student boarders.

I called on Kim Si Thae, a friend of my early days, who was a research student in the medical department of Tohoku University in Sendai City. He had worked together with me in the "Red Reading Society" and "A-Frame Carriers' Society". He was very excited to read the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF.* In fact, in those days there was no Korean who was not excited to read the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* worked out by the General personally. I particularly remember that Kim Si Thae told a story he said he had heard from other friends: It was that a political worker sent by the General had arrived in Japan, and he had such unusual ability that the Japanese could never catch him. In those days legendary stories about the General could be heard wherever Kore-

ans lived. I discussed with Kim Si Thae the orientation for our further struggle before I returned to Tokyo.

Information I read recently stated that the first branch of the ARF in Japan was formed at the Sixth High School in Tokyo in 1940.

Security Monthly, published by the public security department of the police bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs wrote that the aim of the organization was to "win the independence of Korea through a general revolt, taking advantage of confusion in Japan in future...."

There were several people sent to Japan to spread the program of the ARF by the General. They were said to be possessed of "supernatural powers" by the Koreans, who marvelled at the way they always managed to evade the Japanese police.

I did not accomplish anything to speak of, but am proud of having been one of those who went to Japan carrying the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF.* To my regret, the Phung-u Friendship Society failed to engage in any vigorous activity as a branch of the ARF, and the young people from Phungsan who were members of the society were sent back home after the Japanese police raided the society.

Pyong Pho informed my uncle of my address, and he sent me a letter and some money, which was used to help any friends and mitigate police's surveillance.

There was no freedom anywhere for Koreans, whose land had been colonized. Even in Tokyo detectives whose mission it was to keep a watch on Koreans often visited our apartment. Whenever they did so I would dress in my best clothes, pretending to be the son of a rich family in order to allay their suspicions.

Meanwhile, the detective who was in charge of my case in Phungsan was said to have been reprimanded and suffered a reduction in salary for losing all traces of me. My uncle bribed policemen not to enquire too closely into my whereabouts.

At that time I received a message from Ju Pyong Pho telling me to return to Seoul as early as practicable. So I bade a hasty farewell to my friends and left Tokyo.

The Whirlwind of Arrests Occasioned by the Seoul Communist Group Case

Arriving in Seoul one or two days before New Year's Day of 1941, I told Ju Pyong Pho about the situation in Tokyo and what I was doing there. He expressed appreciation for my efforts, saying that things were

going well. Pyong Pho immediately became serious and asked me, "If you begin work, will you complain again? The *Inaugural Declaration of the ARF* and the *Ten-Point Program* said that all people should be united excepting a handful of pro-Japanese, didn't they? What are you going to do in future?"

I criticized my narrow view and pledged to do whatever assignment he may give me.

Only then did his face somewhat thaw. He said he would give me assignment again and asked me as he did before, saying, "Remember that whatever assignment I may give you, carry it out only and don't be curious about its substance."

But it was just at this time that the Seoul Communist Group case broke out, and Comrade Kim and many other people were arrested.

The Seoul Communist Group had carried forward the revolutionary movement in the Seoul area since 1933. The thesis of the International Red Trade Union gave instructions as to rebuilding the Communist Party of Korea, which stressed that the main force was to be composed of the revolutionary working class. Consequently, the revolutionary trade union movement, which continued the struggle during the 1930s, strove to rebuild the party.

Inspired by General Kim Il Sung's anti-Japanese armed struggle in the Mt. Paektu area after 1938, the activities of the Seoul Communist Group were stepped up.

On the first Sunday in September 1939 the first issue of the publication *Communist* was issued in Seoul, and on the same day the illegal organization known as the Seoul United Left Trade Union was formed.

Trade union branches were formed in the metallurgical, textile and media industries, involving nearly 20 large factories in the Seoul area under the umbrella organization. One of their typical activities was the strike of the workers of Thaechang Textile Company in October 1939.

Ju Pyong Pho and Comrade Kim, disguising themselves as repairmen, entered the Thaechang Textile Company and harangued and rallied workers, I am told. Soon after, 1,200 women workers went on strike for five days, calling for pay raises, shorter working hours and improvement of living conditions.

I actually witnessed this victorious strike.

After this success a branch of the textile workers' trade union was formed with tested women workers.

Among them was the woman who became Comrade Kim's wife. I will come back to them later.

I also witnessed the strike of over 500 workers at the Yujong Dye-

works, when I met Comrade Kim, the mastermind behind the strike and the leader of the Seoul Communist Group.

At that time the whole country was astir at the news of the advance to the Musan area and other operations in the homeland of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army led by General Kim Il Sung. The Japanese imperialists, who were making desperate efforts for "maintenance of public peace" and for "turning Koreans into Japanese subjects", might have guessed the connection between the vigorous struggle of the Seoul Communist Group and the advance into the homeland of the KPRA.

The Japanese imperialists censored all news of the KPRA which had been given in a curtailed manner in newspapers. I think that I read about the Hongqihe battle, in which a Japanese army unit led by Maeda was annihilated, as the last item of news about the KPRA.

The Japanese finally found a clue in the Thaechang Textile Company and three roundups of the Seoul Communist Group were made.

The first roundup took place from July-August to December 1940. It was called the "Sodaemun case". It was in this period that Pyong Pho sent me to Tokyo.

During the first roundup Comrade Kim was arrested, and I returned to Seoul immediately. I was entrusted with the job of hiding comrades for whose arrest warrants had been issued and liaising between them. This was a difficult and nerve-racking job. In the meantime, I was told by a messenger that my mother was seriously ill with typhoid fever.

She had no other sons and so no daughters-in-law. The whole family was engaged in cultivating potatoes, so there was no one to take care of her.

I was tormented with worry about whether I should go home to look after her or not, when my friends who had been arrested on account of the friendship society and ordered to leave Tokyo called on me on their way back home. Hearing of my situation, Ri Si Ho volunteered to take care of my mother and told me not to worry. Thanks to Ri Si Ho's tender care my mother recovered, but Ri himself fell ill and breathed his last in the prime of his youth under the quilt my mother used.

"Si Ho, I will do your share of the work." These words were all I could say.

Ri Si Ho can be said to have exemplified the friendship transcending life and death between comrades fighting Japanese imperialism in those days. We regarded it as natural to take difficulties upon ourselves and entrust comrades with easy matters. But it was easier said than done: It seems that I did not carry out the pledge I made...

I cannot recount all the things I did in Seoul, but I would like to mention one incident before telling the story of taking comrades to safety.

One day I met a woman from Phungsan in front of the Changgyong Palace who had got married and lived in Seoul. She was with a young girl who was also from Phungsan and had come to Seoul with the intention of attending medical school. She seemed to me to have an aptitude for arts rather than for medicine, and when I offered this opinion she said without reserve that she had no mind to stay in Seoul and intended to go to Wonsan where her uncle lived and attend Rusi Girls' High School.

When I dropped in at Wonsan several years later I found that she really did attend that high school. Then she was a full-grown girl. I met her for the third time in Phungsan after liberation. She was Kim Sun Im, who later became my wife.

She became gray-haired while attending her mother-in-law and a child for 43 years without her husband, but her image as a young girl in those days comes back to me time and again, stirring my heart. But let us return to Seoul.

There were many comrades to be brought to safety, and one of the emergency cases was Comrade Jo Jae Ok. He was the person through whom Pyong Pho contacted me when I arrived in Seoul for the first time and whom I mistook for a pro-Japanese. I apologized to him for my mistake, but he showed not the slightest sign of displeasure and firmly gripped my hands, urging me to continue fighting. Thus, understanding was brought about and we were as good as united as one.

I needed money to hide Comrade Jo properly. So I borrowed 9,000 *won* from my uncle. Then I visited Comrade Sin Jae Guk, who was the head of the Phungsan air-raid wardens.

He had been forced to do this job by the police, but although the air-raid wardens were dressed in Japanese uniforms they were staunchly anti-Japanese. In addition, they were good allies in disarming and neutralizing all the local Japanese and pro-Japanese organs when the country was liberated.

But Comrade Sin Jae Guk was mistaken by quite a few people after liberation because of his former job. And for this he had a hard time of it during the "September 20 revolt". This will be referred to later.

Hearing news about Seoul and my request for money, he gave me 10,000 *won* . I do not know where he got it from, but it came in useful for hiding Comrade Jo and fulfilling my liaison mission.

My principal contact with the Seoul communists was Comrade Kim Yong Jun, who had graduated from the medical department of Seoul Imperial University. He was working as an assistant professor of pharmacology at that university at the time. Later I learned that Comrades Jo Jae Ok and Kim Yong Jun were in charge of students belonging to the underground organization. Around that time I and Pyong Pho were living in lodgings in Chungsin-dong.

It was past midnight one night when someone abruptly opened the door and entered the room. He was Jo Hui Yon, a comrade of Pyong Pho. He was an intellectual who had graduated from the law school and was widely considered "Korea's Gorki". He was in charge of the education of the members of the Seoul Communist Group. The police had raided his house that day, and, he was so small and his appearance was so seedy that they were dubious whether he was Jo Hui Yon or not. At that moment he fled without even putting his shoes on.

Such an abrupt visit went against the principles of underground work, but Jo urgently needed a place to hide. I sheltered him for a few days, pawning my clothes to buy food for him.

During this time Comrade Jo Jae Ok had to meet another comrade. So I took him to the outside toilet beside the Johung Bank on Jongro Street, and entered the bank to fetch the desired comrade, leaving the words that he should stay there until my return. The appointed time passed by far, but the other person did not show up. So I came back, but Comrade Jo was not seen. I thought that he had been picked up by the police. I hurried to my lodgings and took measure to move Comrade Jo Hui Yon to other place. So you can imagine my joy when I met him by chance in Pyongyang in 1949.

At that time he was working in the propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Party. But later he died of disease in Seoul in the whirlwind of war in 1950. So that was my last meeting with him.

Comrade Jo Jae Ok had been arrested by the Japanese police, but his father paid a large bribe to get him released. But he died from the disease he contracted at the time without seeing the day of liberation. His father, who was a wealthy capitalist, was not denounced as pro-Japanese or capitalist after liberation, because of his son's services for the revolution and he lived in comfort for the rest of his life under the people's government, I hear.

Then a warrant for the arrest of Pyong Pho was issued. The second roundup called "Jongro police station case" began. Some time after he was arrested by policemen of Jongro police station and thrown into Sodaemun Prison.

A third roundup is said to have taken place towards the end of 1941, but I had already left Seoul for Phungsan in June 1941.

My Mother's Heart

Arriving in Phungsan, I told my comrades and my mother that Pyong Pho had been arrested. My mother had recovered from her illness but was still weak.

She did sewing by lamplight till late at night, and one night the sound of the wind blowing hard outside made her stop working. She listened to the sound and sighed.

"It will soon be winter and it will be cold in prison," she said sadly. "Pyong Pho must be sitting in prison now, shaking his knees."

Her eyes were glistening with tears. Mother used to say, "Pyong Pho is my son." Pyong Pho's image who habitually shook his knees sitting seemed to have occurred to her. When Mother at times got sick of it and said, tapping him, "Why do you shake your knees? Just as a poor man," he smiled with "Yes?" and set his knees and after a while began to shake his knees again in spite of himself. Such habit of his seems to have been engraved painfully in women's mind.

When I met Comrade Kim's wife coming to Pyongyang here and talk referred to Ju Pyong Pho, she first recalled his habit.

"When unable to bear the sight, I tap him and give a sharp sidelong glance at him saying 'Again the habit...', he stops, saying, 'Good heavens, I did again what to be blamed,' and after a while again begins to shake. So I laughed more than once."

...

Mother continued to do needlework while sighing and at times groaning. I thought she was making clothes for me.

A few days later she produced a silk jacket and trousers she had made and said, "Give them to Pyong Pho. It will get much colder, I am afraid." She had remade for him the silk jacket and trousers she had brought with her when she had married.

I often thought of this episode when I was in jail for 34 years in south Korea. How would Mother have felt if she had known that her son was trembling in an ice-cold prison cell and even had cold water thrown over him? If she had known that her son trembled, went hungry and lived in a grave-like prison cell for 34 years her heart would have not borne it. She passed away without knowing to her last day what torment her son had gone through. But however great my torment was, it was not to be com-

pared with the torment she suffered while waiting for her son and repeatedly saying, "Our In Mo will return."

Oh, how can I repay her anguish?...

Taking the clothes my mother had made, I, together with Kim Tok Ryong, went to Seoul. Pyong Pho's elder brother Ju Pyong Du had been released after serving one year in Hamhung prison, so he accompanied us. He was imprisoned because he had grown poppies secretly to finance Pyong Pho's activities. Luckily the Japanese had no inkling that Ju Pyong Du was a member of the ARF.

As neither Ju Pyong Du nor I could go about as we pleased in Seoul, Kim Tok Ryong went to Sodaemun prison alone. He gave the clothes to Pyong Pho and returned. Owing to torture and the hard life in prison, Pyong Pho's physical condition was bad indeed, he said.

We agreed to go to Phungsan immediately and launch a movement for Pyong Pho's release. While seeking a lawyer in Seoul, Pyong Pho's elder brother and other comrades busied themselves raising bail money. It was not easy to find a suitable lawyer, but at last money proved its worth and we didn't need a lawyer after all. We succeeded in bribing the public procurator, and Pyong Pho was released in December 1943.

After two years and six months Pyong Pho came out of the prison wearing the trousers and jacket my mother had made. I and Kim Tok Ryong went to Pukchong to meet Pyong Pho and returned together to Phungsan. Pyong Pho then went to his home in Munjophyong-ri.

Comrades Kim Yong Jun and Kim Kyong Mun came to Phungsan from Seoul too at that time or just before it. Kim Kyong Mun, who was my friend from the children's struggle days, remained, but Kim Yong Jun only stayed at my uncle's home for about a week.

At that time my mother was ill, and Kim Yong Jun, who had graduated from Seoul Imperial University in medicine advised me to feed her crow meat. I did so, and she quickly recovered. So when I later told him the story, he said:

"What wonderful remedy can crow be? Crow meat as well as beef are good food for undernourished patients. Your family is poor and has many mouths to feed. Even when your mother gets tasty food by chance, she feeds family members as the eldest daughter-in-law and herself always goes hungry. Moreover, she takes upon herself all the housekeeping and hard work, including farming, and so is liable to become sick and weak. However, if you get delicacies of all description for her, how can she eat them? Luckily people hate crows as the bird of ill omen and do not think of eating their meat. Fortunately many of them are around your house. So I recommended their meat as a nutritious food for your mother."

Listening to him, I admired his wise prescription. I thought that when the country was won back he would become a fine physician for the nation. But he was killed in the war.

My mother, who became healthy again thanks to Comrade Kim, seemed to be very happy, having me at her side after an interval of over ten years. But she did not express her joy in words. My maternal grandmother had drummed a lesson into her head in her youth: "It will not do for a widow to be talkative." She was spoken of as being a brusque person. She was reticent but cared much for her son. She was always worried that this son was being chased by the Japanese police.

It is natural that it is difficult for a mother to understand all the thoughts of her son. She seemed to have thought that if she worked harder and made the house look nice and the standard of living improved I would stay at home. She always gave me extra money that she had earned through her hard work. But this thoughtless son simply ate his meals as ever and went about his own business.

Parting and Meeting

Ju Pyong Pho recovered from his illness in his house in Munjophyong-ri under the surveillance of secret service men. It seems to be in the foul nature of the Japanese to harass people in this way and that, and the Japanese detectives never gave Pyong Pho a single day of complete rest. Annoyed at this, Pyong Pho built a stone hut in Saemsuchon, a long way from his house, and entrenched himself in it. We often met there. Even confinement in prison had not broken his habits of shaking his knees while sitting and sleeping with his arms outstretched and his fists clenched.

My mother once said with a smile: "He seems to fight the Japanese even in his sleep." He was as enthusiastic as ever. In fact, he rather seemed to have become more enthusiastic. We talked about the situation and discussed what was to be done in future, oblivious of the passage of time.

He was full of hope that the day of national liberation was not distant because the General's fight for Korea's freedom was in its last stage.

We promised each other that when his health improved we would go to Mt. Paektu and take part in the General's operations for national liberation. But our dream did not come true. In July 1944, on the call of the high court in Seoul, Pyong Pho was escorted by two policemen of Phungsan to Seoul to face trial. I did not see him leave.

On returning to the stone hut after having met other comrades, I

found it empty and his family at home sitting there distressed.

His mother wailed, "My Pyong Pho has been arrested again. He vowed to return when the Japanese were smashed. In the meantime, he left a photograph of himself, saying, 'If you want to see me, look at this.'"

I never saw Pyong Pho again.

It is said that he succeeded in escaping on reaching Seoul and went underground. Later I received one or two letters signed with his pseudonym.

One year later Japan was defeated.

The Last Year of Colonial Rule

It is painful for me to recall the last year until the August 15 liberation. Pyong Pho went underground, many comrades hid themselves, and Kim Yong Gyo and some other comrades went to Hungnam to evade conscription into the Japanese army. At that time the workers in the factories under the Noguchi financial group in the Hungnam region were excused from conscription because they were producing munitions. But in addition to evading conscription, it goes without saying that they went to Hungnam with the view of forming an underground organization to speed up national liberation.

At that time the press was full of accounts of the "Great East Asian War", which reported defeat as victory. All the publications in the Korean language were abolished. In those days the Korean alphabet, Korean language and even Korean names were abolished.

My uncle warned me that jobless young men were liable to be conscripted. He advised me to run a tailor's shop with some other comrades, as I had done before. So, together with Kim Tok Ryong and Ri Sok Gi, I set up a tailor' shop, which was also a convenient front for establishing contacts with comrades.

Sin Jae Guk, the head of the local air-raid wardens, was a frequent visitor, and Pak Hung Yun, Ri Chang Hwang and other comrades dropped in almost every day. Judging by the number of people going in and out, the shop should have been doing well, but the real state of affairs was the opposite.

Kim Yong Gyo often came and told me news from Hungnam and Seoul. At that time he wore such shabby clothes that we made a suit for him out of good cloth. But Yong Gyo wore the suit only in August 1946, one year after liberation. No one had time to think of trivial things like clothes at that time because of the fast-changing situation.

The story of Kim Yong Gyo's suit reminds me of a letter I received from Pyong Pho. The day after we made the suit, I think, Pyong Pho's elder brother Ju Pyong Du, who had been in Seoul, brought the letter, in which he explained the situation heralding the imminent defeat of Japan and proposed to organize guerrilla activities on the Kaema Plateau.

At that time in the western region in my charge there were the organization of the ARF which had been formed already, the Ansan Anti-Japanese Youth Corps, newly formed in March 1943, and the Friendship Society of the Phung-u Pukchong Substitute Textile (Kurada) Company, which was formed by Kim Tok Ryong in the summer of 1943. These organizations made spears and swords in preparation for cooperation with the General's advance into the homeland and often conducted military drills while explaining and publicizing the General's policy for national liberation. But I had no experience of guerrilla activity, and so was impatiently waiting for trained people who were said to have been sent by Pyong Pho.

But the countersign did not agree at my first attempt at contact. I and others went into hiding and one comrade was arrested. Perhaps the meeting was exposed by the information network of the Japanese police. Thus the plan for starting guerrilla activities was aborted.

I regretted the abortion of the plan for long.

When I was in prison in south Korea I learned that a guerrilla unit led by Kim Jong Baek was active in Paegun Valley in Phochon County, Kyonggi Province. When the Japanese conscription and forced labour draft were at their height, over 80 young people gathered in Paegun Valley in Paegun-dong, Idong Sub-County, Phochon County, Kyonggi Province. Now the idle rich in south Korea frequent for bath.

They formed a guerrilla troop to harass the rear of the Japanese imperialists, who were on the brink of defeat. Its leader, Kim Jong Baek, was a worker. They were divided into small units. In the daytime they learned how to use Model 99 and Model 38 rifles under the guidance of men with military knowledge and made bombs with dynamite. At night they assassinated policemen and seized their weapons. They even destroyed a section of the central railway, I was told.

It was decades later that I learned what immense preparations were made then all over the country in pursuit of General Kim Il Sung's line for all-people resistance. Korean students in Japan, to say nothing of those in Korea, prepared themselves for resistance under the slogan "Let us rise in response when General Kim's unit takes the full-scale offensive!". The Korean workers in Niigata, who had been forcibly drafted, ran away in groups to fight the Japanese imperialists.

In Pukchong people raided the Japanese police stations in Toksong, Janghung and Samgi and disarmed the policemen when the General started the operation for national liberation.

I knew little about this because I was in hiding and then confined to prison in south Korea.

Here I would like to mention the last letter I received from Pyong Pho in May 1945. In the letter, which he sent from Seoul, he asked me to send 20,000 *won* immediately. In those days one *mal* (about 15kg) of rice cost two *won* 70 *jon* . So it can be easily imagined what an enormous amount of money 20,000 *won* was. When I shamelessly begged my uncle for the money he said that he had only 7,000 *won* in cash. So I hastily went to Pukchong to see Kim Kyong Mun. His father was a big landlord and a man of substance in the village. Kim Kyong Mun had returned from Seoul and got a job as the accountant of the Pukchong Hemp Factory through his father's influence.

He was a member of the Friendship Society of the Pukchong Substitute Textile (Kurada) Company. When I called on him he was just going out, taking with him 20,000 *won* of the factory's money to pay for hemp materials. When I explained how pressed I was for money he said without hesitation that he would take the money to Seoul and meet Pyong Pho. I could not find words to express my gratitude. This was in June 1945, when the Japanese imperialists were engaged in desperate suppression just before their doom.

I failed to find enough words of praise for the self-sacrificing patriotism of Kim Kyong Mun, who made a correct decision without a word in such difficult circumstances.

After Comrade Kim left I hid in the mountains. It was evident that when he was found to be missing the police would come looking for me. I slept on dry grass in the crevice of a rock in the mountains for about two months, eating only potatoes and salt, when my comrades came running to tell me that the country had been liberated.

3. LIBERATION AND THE BUILDING OF A NEW HOMELAND

August 15, 1945, people who did not experience the excitement and enthusiasm of that day will never know what it was like.

I crossed the hills of the Kaema Plateau, shedding tears of joy. It was a release not just from two months hiding in the mountains but also from the prison called a Japanese colony where I had lived for almost the first 30 years of my life. When I arrived home I found Kim Tok Ryong and Ri Kyong Mo waiting for me. We hugged each other, overjoyed.

The joy of liberation was evident in everyone; they laughed and shouted seemingly for no reason and visited each other incessantly. Our comrades, too, visited each other and shared the happiness of liberation.

Kim Yong Gyo came back from Hungnam and stayed at my home. He even pestered my mother to dance in celebration of Korea's liberation.

My mother was most happy that she could now live together with her son with a feeling of security. As the Japanese were defeated, her son did not need to hide or flee, as there was no worry about him being arrested any more.

But her son did not stay at home; a new struggle was awaiting the people of Korea.

The People's Strength

Things went well in Phungsan County, as in other sub-counties. There our comrades, members of the ARF, took all the organs into their hands in time. The organizations of the ARF and other anti-Japanese organizations can be said to have formed the foundation of government organs after liberation. In Phungsan County, for instance, the underground organization of the air-raid wardens Comrade Sin Jae Guk had built up occupied the Japanese administrative offices and formed an armed self-defence corps.

But the case of our sub-county was different. There the rich people who had wielded authority under Japanese rule, together with the cat's-paws of the Japanese, grasped all power and authority, taking advantage of the fact

that I and other comrades failed to return from hiding in time. Among them, the son of a village worthy who had graduated from Tokyo Imperial University commanded and armed the underlings of the Japanese and made a great fuss on the plea of maintaining public peace, occupying the police station and sub-county office. They were quick to grab power, perhaps because they depended on authority for their positions.

We who were engaged in the anti-Japanese movement had always been chased and maltreated under Japanese rule, particularly those who had been poor peasants and could not address the public with confidence because they had not received an education. So there is no doubt that the upstarts thought the masses had no strength.

Such being the situation, we discussed what do to. All agreed on the need to drive them out, but the problem was how? Some comrades argued, "We fought the Japanese, so what problem do those rogues present? Let's smash them." After a while it was agreed that we must drive them out using the strength of the masses, and not that of just a few of us. Another opinion was put forth, "Some petty-bourgeoisie supports them. Will things proceed well?" It was, in the long run, planned to call a meeting of the sub-county's inhabitants about one month later, organizing peasants in the meantime by sending agitators to various parts of the countryside. They were to find people who knew the details of the crimes those now lording it over had committed under Japanese rule and get them to expose at the meeting.

The upstarts were full of self-confidence: They even proposed that we work under them. But it was impossible for us to join hands with such rascals.

We opened the meeting as prearranged when the organization of the peasants was completed. At the meeting many peasants, who were ordinarily reticent, mounted the rostrum and denounced the crimes of the underlings of the landlords and pro-Japanese elements one by one. The atmosphere of the meeting became heated and the people who had been lackeys of the Japanese were put to shame. Then a proposal on electing sub-county officials was carried. An election was immediately held and an old conscientious man of our sub-county was elected chairman of the sub-county people's committee. The underlings of the landlords and pro-Japanese elements were completely routed.

One may ask what I and my comrades gained by the victory. What we gained was not merely some place but the confidence that we could utterly defeat the pro-Japanese elements and their underlings.

The confidence we gained then gave us strength later when the "September 20 revolt" broke out, and in the period of the democratic reform and the first democratic election. Through the meeting of the peo-

ple of the sub-county we became keenly aware that the world view of the masses is sharp and that their strength is great.

The result of the meeting was that all the organizations in Phungsan County came under correct leadership. However, that did not mean that everything went smoothly; not long afterwards the reactionaries went on the offensive.

The "September 20 Revolt" in Phungsan and My Comrades

Comrade Sin Jae Guk, who worked in Phungsan County, unexpectedly turned up at the Ansu Sub-County administration office on the evening of September 20. He was much perplexed. A strong and bold man, Sin was always calm and steady when he was doing underground work under Japanese rule. But this time he seemed completely at a loss.

According to him, that day the armed pro-Japanese upstarts raided the public security station in Phungsan County town and captured the armory. Sin and the other comradres had fled without daring to put up any resistance. The reason the reactionaries gave for ousting Sin was that Sin had been the head of the air-raid wardens under Japanese rule and had frequented the police station, and that therefore he had been a "pro-Japanese element".

The situation was very serious; if the confusion was not straightened out, there was no knowing how things might develop. That night we went to Pukchong by car and rallied over 30 members of the self-defence corps there. When we were about to depart for Phungsan Comrade Sin Jae Guk said that he would stay in Pukchong but would not assume any post for the time being, with a view to showing the masses that there must not be the slightest compromise with injustice in building a new homeland. He even suggested that we confiscate his house.

Pressed for time, we decided to discuss the matter later and travelled to Phungsan, where we arrived at dawn. Many local youths, who had already had word from us, were waiting for us.

We were ready for bloodshed, but when we attacked the public security station, the occupiers put up no resistance.

We investigated how the matter started. The source of the trouble was a Japanese called Osuka, who had been the chief of police in Phungsan. He was caught fleeing to Hamhung after having hidden himself in the vicinity immediately after the August 15 liberation. When they

heard that Osuka had been arrested, those who had served under him feared that he might reveal their evil deeds and conspired to start the "September 20 revolt". It might be exaggeration to call it a revolt, but it taught us a serious lesson.

We detained all of the rebels and discussed the measures to be taken. First of all, there was no objection to settling the issue of Comrade Sin Jae Guk in the manner he had suggested.

When we had finished the matter and left the public security station a crowd had gathered, and they praised our decisive action. The remaining problem was how to deal with the insurgents. My comrades wanted to entrust me with the matter. I accepted, on condition that they left it entirely to me whether to release or punish them.

That evening I told all the detainees what Osuka had revealed about them, and asked sternly:

"Do you admit your past crimes?"

They lowered their heads, unable to offer any excuses in the face of the irrefutable evidence.

"I will give you a chance to take part in building a new homeland if you sincerely repent in a spirit of national conscience." I said.

They tearfully pledged to do so. I thereupon released them then and there.

I can say with confidence that I did not take the life of any person simply because he or she was a "reactionary". My comrades learned through experience in the meantime that even those who had committed crimes, if they are embraced boldly instead of being treated with scorn, repent and take the right path. The magnanimity of the Mt. Paektu anti-Japanese guerrillas I witnessed at the age of 13 had been an impressive lesson to me. I mean the magnanimity with which the guerrillas spared the life of the Korean policeman who repented of his fault, and did not shoot the wife of the wicked police chief, a non-combatant.

I and my comrades worked that way. We made concession on personal affairs and put them off, if it helped our work.

Comrade Sin Jae Guk, for instance, regarded it as more urgent to straighten things out rather than to prove his own innocence. He handed over his house of his own accord and changed his job so that our work could proceed smoothly.

In this way and following this rule, we could earn the trust of the masses and work enjoying their trust.

Some time later, Comrade Sin Jae Guk moved to Phungsan County, enjoying the respect of the people, who had learned the real state

of affairs, and became a member of the first Party cell there on October 8.

Days of Joy

On October 8, 1945 I, together with Comrades Kim Tok Ryong, Sin Jae Guk, Kim Kyong Mun, Pak Hung Yun and Kim Yong Gyo, was admitted to the Communist Party of North Korea and formed the first Party cell in Phungsan County.

We had to guarantee each other's eligibility for Party membership in turn, namely, Comrade Kim Tok Ryong, mine; I, Kim Yong Gyo's; and Yong Gyo, another's.

The meeting place was simple and there was no unusual formality, but all of us were filled with excitement. As the first Party members in our liberated native area, we solemnly pledged to support national hero General Kim Il Sung and fight to build a rich and powerful democratic sovereign state in the whole of Korea, and for the good of the working masses of the people, the overwhelming majority of the population, at the risk of our lives. I can say with confidence that I was reminded of that pledge at every difficult moment of my life, and it stood by me. So long as that pledge was in my mind and preserved in my heart, I was a member of the Workers' Party of Korea and had to discharge my duty as a Party member.

Kim Tok Ryong was the first person I wanted to meet when I returned to north Korea via Panmunjom after a separation of 43 years. But he, who had been my closest friend and revolutionary comrade, was already dead.

He had been my comrade and friend since my childhood. He was always with me from the time of the "Red Reading Society" through the period of the "A-Frame Carriers' Society", through my first confinement in prison to the days when we fought as members of the ARF. People said that where I was, there was Kim Tok Ryong also, and that if one wanted to meet Ri In Mo one was advised to call on Kim Tok Ryong. He was called my "shadow". He creditably discharged whatever assignment he was given and went where he was told to go to without hesitation, however distant and hazardous the posting. He went to Changbai, Pukchong, Hamhung, Seoul and any place he was told to go. He walked at a quick pace and was reliable. We called him "Chollibae". We trusted each other implicitly. When I was head of the propaganda department of the county Party committee he was the head of its organization department. I most

thought of Ju Pyong Pho, and Kim Tok Ryong. Ju Pyong Pho also died long ago. I learned that Kim Tok Ryong, who was my revolutionary comrade and friend and warrantor for my Party membership, was engaged in Party work for a long time and was director of the "Museum of the Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Kim Hyong Gwon" in Phabal-ri, Phungsan County before he retired and died of illness several years ago. My heart ached at the thought that he, whom I missed very much, had died before me.

He said to my wife, after learning news of me in south Korea some time before his death in 1990: "To be sure, I know what In Mo is like. I firmly believe that he will fight well to the end and return to the embrace of the Party," I was told.

Comrade Kim Tok Ryong guaranteed my Party life to the end in that way. I will never forget him.

The founding of the Communist Party of North Korea was proclaimed with the formation of its central organizational committee in Pyongyang on October 10, 1945.

I could not find words to express the joy and excitement I felt at the news of the founding of our Party and the publication of its organ *Jongro* . My Party life, my genuine life as a true man, can be said to have begun at that time.

Those who read my memoirs written in south Korea perhaps remember that I mentioned that October 10 was my birthday. I almost forgot my birthday during almost 40 years' confinement in prison. But I never forgot October 10 as the day when my Party life began or 306, the number of my Party membership card. So in my memoirs I wrote without hesitation that October 10 was my birthday.

That day Ri In Mo came into the world as a member of the Workers' Party of Korea, didn't he?

Immediately after the proclamation of the founding of the Party we six members of the first Party cell in Phungsan got together to form the Phungsan County Party Committee. Chairman of the South Hamgyong Provincial Party Committee O Ki Sop sent a man to head of our committee, saying, "No one is eligible to be the leader in Phungsan County."

But the past career of this man was problematic. He had served as an overseer at the construction site of the Hochongang Power Station after being released from Hamhung prison where he had served a term as an ideological offender. His reputation at the construction site had been a bad one, as he was said to have colluded with the owner of the project.

We complained to the provincial Party committee, which then sent Comrade Jo Won Sik. Thus the county Party committee was formed.

Meanwhile, as recounted above, Kim Kyong Mun, who had gone to Seoul immediately before liberation, taking with him 20,000 *won* which belonged to the hemp factory, got into trouble. The Pukchong County Party Committee, which took over the hemp factory, accused him of having embezzled state property, and Kim Kyong Mun was imprisoned. Underground work did not leave evidence and communications with Seoul were difficult. So we were distressed, unable to vouch for the use of the money. Luckily Comrade Kim in Seoul sent a letter explaining the use of the money, and Kim Kyong Mun was released and he was exonerated. He later became chairman of the Phungsan County Committee of the Democratic Youth League.

Several days after the founding of the Party we heard more moving news. On October 14 General Kim Il Sung delivered a speech on his triumphal return home. I was surprised when I saw his photograph and read address in the newspaper. He very much resembled the young man whom I met at the Hwangsuwon Dam construction site in the summer of 1937, as I briefly mentioned above. Moreover, his speech seemed to resound with the sonorous voice with which he told us at the dam construction site about the need to smash Japanese imperialism through the great unity of the Korean nation and build a new Korea. But none of my comrade was convinced by my conjecture. They, too, first saw the General's image in the photograph, but felt as if they had been familiar with him for a long time. I, naturally, had the same feeling, they said. If there had been even one comrade who had been with me on that occasion...

That night we remained in the county Party office till late, telling stories about the General, which we would have had to speak about in whispers only a few months previously. I can not recall the details of our discussions that night, but basically, we believed that things would go well as long as the General was in Pyongyang and leading us.

The success of the agrarian reform, the law on nationalization of industries, the law on sexes equality and other democratic reforms which were carried out victoriously in the whole northern half of Korea turned our belief into a firm faith.

Kim Yong Gyo prepared to go abroad to study in August 1946, when the merger of the Communist Party with the New Democratic Party was at its height. He was the first student to go abroad to study after the country became independent. Everybody in Phungsan County was overjoyed at this event. I remember how we busied ourselves preparing new clothes for him who was to go up to Pyongyang.

We remembered that we had made clothes for Kim Yong Gyo when Kim Tok Ryong put up the sign of a tailor's shop immediately before liber-

ation. We made the clothes with wool fabric with much efforts. We were so proud that Kim Yong Gyo, who had studied under great difficulties while working as a newspaper delivery boy in Tokyo before liberation was to go abroad for study at the expense of the state. It was really our world.

The inaugural congress of the Workers' Party of North Korea was held in Pyongyang on August 28, immediately after Kim Yong Gyo's departure.

I was honored to have been elected a deputy of the province to the congress, together with Comrade Sin Jae Guk.

The congress was held from August 28 to 30, 1946, with the attendance of 818 delegates from the various provinces and over 100 observers from different political parties and public organizations.

There I saw General Kim Il Sung in the flesh. When he declared the opening of the inaugural congress of the Workers' Party of North Korea tears came to my eyes in spite of myself.

I was reminded of the days when I had roamed around northeast China seeking to join the anti-Japanese guerrillas which he led and the meeting at the Hwangsuwon Dam construction site in 1937. My heart almost burst with the conviction that the young man I met then was indeed General Kim Il Sung. My determination to lead a worthy life as a soldier serving under the national hero General Kim Il Sung then became a firm determination.

I started to work as the head of the propaganda department of the Phungsan County Party Committee soon after the Party was founded. I was extremely busy in those days. Matters to attend to continued to stream in, and every day new things and new changes were in store for me.

I was involved in campaigning day and night during the runup to the democratic election on November 3, 1946, fighting against false rumours spread by the reactionaries, who hindered the election, rabbling, "Election is too early." or "Ballot must be cast into the black box."

Once a man from Chonnam Sub-County called on me and whispered, "People say that my wife will give birth to son if she does not put her ballot in the box but boil and eat it. Is that true?" I was so disgusted at this nonsense that I shouted at him: "I will give you a whole bunch of ballot papers, and you can boil and eat all of them."

But later I learned that he had five daughters, while his lifelong desire was to have a son. Repenting of having shouted at him, I kindly explained what the election was all about. At this he said, "If I had known that the election was to support the General, I wouldn't have believed that rubbish the reactionaries were spreading." He and his wife took part in

the balloting, and later I heard the glad news that a son had been born to them. It was the first election in our history, so naturally there was a lot of misunderstanding.

When it was proclaimed that, as a result of the election, the People's Committee of North Korea headed by great General Kim Il Sung had been formed in February 1947 we were wild with delight. Even now the events of those days of joy pass before my mind's eye like a kaleidoscope, stirring my heart. I would like to run across the hills and fields of the Kaema Plateau, again as I did that day.

My Wedding

I married in 1948, but my wife and I lived together for only two years before we were separated for 43 years. She I met miraculously again is now beside me. When I look at her, I feel a lump in my throat, seized with the feeling of gratitude rather than love. Nay, love has become stronger. So if I part from her again, I feel like to die right away.

My wife was also a native of Phungsan. Her family ran an inn and was better off than most. Her maternal grandfather ran a brewery in Wonsan, so she went to Wonsan to attend Rusi Girls' High School. She first met me when she went to Seoul with the intention of attending Seoul Medical School. She met me for the second time, I think, when I stayed in Wonsan to take a train running on the Pyongyang-Wonsan railway on my way to or from Seoul, I suppose.

She returned to Phungsan after liberation and worked hard, supporting our comrades in their work.

Around that time she applied for admission to the Party, and by chance I was her first interviewer. I was pleased at her revolutionary attitude,so I naturally gave her a good appraisal. Being enthusiastic about life and work, she passed the other examinations smoothly and became a Party member. She was active as the head of the women's department of the Phungsan County Party Committee.

I was not a man of a sentimental nature, but she liked me. I do not know why. I was hard working and at the time I often used to leave the county Party committee office late at night. She used to hide somewhere and suddenly appear in front of me on my way home, calling out, "Comrade In Mo!", and cling to my arm. At first I was indifferent, thinking she behaved so because we were old acquaintances. But as time went on my heart began to be captivated. She was a blooming girl and lively woman comrade devoted to building a new homeland, wasn't she after

all? At that time I was 30 years old, and every morning and evening was harassed by my mother who wanted me to get married. At first when she came running up and linked arms I used to pull my arm away stealthily, fearing someone might see us. But on the occasions when she did not appear in front of me on my way home from the office I was worried inwardly until I saw her in the office the next morning, wondering what had happened to her.

Thus I accepted her in my heart, but it was not easy to make up my mind when I thought of marriage. She was ten years younger than I and had grown up without knowing the hardships of life. I wondered whether she confused a good senior comrade with a good match. I thought that perhaps she, a girl of 20, should choose her life companion after meeting more men and accumulating experience. Moreover, I feared that she might not be able to adapt to the poor living conditions of my family.

The thought that I might never meet such a woman again distressed me. In desperation, I decided to pretend to be indifferent to her. She who waited for me on my way home from office was put to a loss seeing my glance which suddenly hardened. She did not cling to my arms as before and only followed me, saying "Comrade In Mo!" in a tearful voice. To complicate matters further, her mother was distressed when she learned that her daughter wanted to marry me. Her reasoning was that a man who had spent so many years devoted to the anti-Japanese movement, neglecting his mother, might neglect his wife as well.

Looking back, I now think that my mother-in-law was right to worry. As it turned out, I lived with my wife barely two years and was separated from her for over 40 years.

In 1948 I was transferred from the Phungsan County Party Committee to the Hungnam City Party Committee, still as the head of the propaganda department. When I was first instructed to go to Hungnam I protested that my experience in an out-of-the-way place like Phungsan had not equipped me for work in a big city like Hungnam.

To tell the truth, I did not want to leave the place where I was born and had dear comrades. Speaking even more frankly, I did not want to part from Sun Im. But the higher authorities sent me to the Party school for three months. Then I left for Hungnam in August.

At that time preparations for north-south general election for founding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) were in full swing. The draft Constitution of the Republic, which was approved unanimously on April 29, 1948, was adopted as the Constitution of the DPRK at the fifth meeting of the People's Assembly of North Korea in July 1948, and it was decided to hold an election for deputies to the Supreme People's

Assembly across the whole of north and south Korea. It was a bold step taken to establish a unified government for the whole of Korea in a situation fraught with the danger of the nation being divided due to the "May 10 separate election" and the establishment of a separate "government" in the southern part of Korea.

The whole country seethed with election fever, as I and my mother prepared to go to Hungnam. On the appointed day the manager of the Hungnam Fertilizer Factory sent a lorry. I handed over my house in Phungsan to Party officials, packed my things and, together with my mother, climbed on to the lorry. At that moment my future wife suddenly appeared and insisted on going with us. She clung to me, weeping.

I was embarrassed, but my mother was quite composed. She told her to get on the lorry and we went to Hungnam together.

She had persuaded her mother to withdraw her objection, and, I, too, finally made up my mind to marry her, as I found her to be no longer a green girl. I was of a somewhat fussy temperament. In the Phungsan days I had sharply reproved her once for unsatisfactory work as the head of the women's department and made her weep. But three years' Party life had hardened her, I supposed.

After I returned to the northern part of the motherland I, together with my wife, recalled the dear old days. She suddenly said to me, "I read the memoirs you wrote when you were in the south. It isn't true that I chased you like that!"

I wonder if she regretted that I had made public a story which should have been kept a secret. But at the time I could not imagine that I would meet my wife again. So I wanted to let people know the truth about our love story.

So I only laughed at her rebuke.

We recalled various happenings between us, beginning with the first meeting; I found that she remembered those days with pride.

She said that she did not chase me but that I chased her. She said that I called on her when she attended Rusi Girls' High School and that I bought boiled corn cobs for her secretly when she was the head of the women's department and cited various other facts. In this way she tried to prove her case.

"Do you remember when we walked along the bank of the Sinwon River in Phungsan one starlit night?" she asked me. That night I had confessed my love for her and we had plighted our troth, she said.

I am not sure whether I did actually confess my love for her then, but I vividly remember that I gave her Jo Ki Chon's poem *Mt. Paektu* and the

History of the Soviet Communist Party to read. Indeed, it is possible that I really confessed that I loved her.

She added, "Then you asked me, 'Can you look after my mother?'"

So she recollected the details after all.

It is fortunate that she recalls that I loved her enthusiastically in those days, because I often reproached myself for having repaid her so poorly for her love of me.

My wife and I often look at the photograph of our wedding. The events of that unforgettable day still appear in my mind's eye.

In fact it was not an ordinary wedding, first of all because on that day the first session of the Supreme People's Assembly declared the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea headed by General Kim Il Sung. Secondly because we had already held a wedding ceremony.

On August 25 immediately after the successful election of deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly throughout the north and south we held a wedding ceremony in Hamhung, helped by my comrades, who busied themselves as if it was their own affair.

But my family and comrades in Phungsan insisted that the wedding be held there. They would not listen although I told them that the wedding had already taken place. They themselves would make all the preparations and it would suffice if the bride and bridegroom simply were present, they said. They even fixed the date. We could not help but agree, and the wedding was celebrated again.

My wedding coincided with the celebration of a national holiday, when everywhere in Phungsan's streets flags with the blue and red stripes of the Republic fluttered, voices resounded in song and people were making merry.

My comrades made us come out into the courtyard to take a wedding photograph in the open where the light was better. Chairman of the youth league Kim Kyong Mun took the hanging scrolls bearing the names of the bride and bridegroom out of the house and set them up. When the photograph was about to be taken Kim Tok Ryong shouted at us to wait for a minute and told us to move aside a little. We did so without knowing the reason. He told us to move aside some more. Other comrades, too, urged us to do so. Thinking they were joking, I looked round and found the flag of the Republic hanging from the edge of the eaves over our heads. They wanted to make it the background of the photograph.

The flag of the Republic and the voices of children singing the *Song of the Declaration of the People's Republic* reminded me that that very day was the one on which the DPRK was declared. I was happier and

prouder at having our own motherland at last than at my wedding. I felt reassured and invigorated because we had the great General as the head of the country and nation.

On that day my comrades asked me to sing a song. I sang the revolutionary song *Song of the Red Flag.*

...
Hold high the Red flag
We solemnly pledge beneath it.

The rising generation might think that such a song is not suitable for a wedding. I knew many other songs, and so I do not know why I sang that one. My comrades joined in the chorus and their sturdy voices resounded.

After our marriage my wife taught music and dance at the Culture School, the predecessor of the Arts University in Hamhung. I worked with the Hamhung City Party Committee, receiving 1,600 *won* (worth 16 *won* today) as my monthly salary. But this was not enough to live on. My wife, who had artistic talent, immediately had her ability recognized, so she received more pay than I did, and managed the housekeeping with it.

Once my wife took me to a cinema to see the Soviet film *Village Woman Teacher.* The hero is a socialist revolutionary, whose organization is raided by the police. The hero escapes to the house of an aristocrat, where the owner's young daughter hides him in her room. The hero leaves, promising to write to her, but is killed in action. Informed of his death, she visits the hero's grave and lays flowers before it. She remains in the village and teaches at the village school for the rest of her life. After the success of the revolution, the school is promoted to be a university, with her as the president.

After seeing the film, my wife suddenly said:

"In the Korean classical novel *Tale of Chun Hyang* the heroine Chun Hyang faithfully waits for Ri To Ryong, her noble young lover, tenaciously preserving her chastity. But isn't she really desirous of improving her station in life rather than preserving her chastity? If she waited for a son of a poor peasant or a tenant farmer, it may be called true love."

Listening to her, I came to firmly believe in her as a comrade. Her voice and expression that day are still vivid in my memory.

However, I failed to become a warm-hearted husband. I was fastidious about food to such an extent that my mother and wife contrived a "trick" to teach me a lesson.

One morning, when I entered the dining room I found the table set

satisfactorily. My wife and mother were not there, as if they were dissatisfied at something. Thinking it somewhat strange, I ate the meal alone. Then I found my clothes clean and ironed and my shoes shined. There was nothing to find fault with. Only then did I realize that my mother and wife had intentionally done this to correct my ungrateful temperament. By the way, the relationship between my mother and my wife was like that between mother and daughter rather than that between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. They were on very good terms.

I felt remorseful. I couldn't help it, but I had a nervous disposition. So, as I was going to work I said, "Look here, if you go out this afternoon please drop in on me. I have in my office a book called *A Collection of One Hundred Pieces of Music* which I bought for you."

According to my wife, a village woman once asked her: "How is that such a boorish man has such a pretty wife?"

Whenever I missed my wife while fighting behind the enemy lines I would be filled with remorse that I had failed to treat her kindly. She herself, however, says that although I was somewhat particular I was warmhearted and enthusiastic.

In 1949 a daughter was born to us. At that time everyone was busy trying to fulfill the Two-Year National Economic Plan. I was away from home for about 20 days after the birth of my daughter, running to this factory and that factory, so I failed to give her a name.

When Kang Hyon Chol, deputy head of the propaganda department, called at my home and learned that the baby had still not got a name, chose the name "Hyon Ok" by selecting one element from his name and another one from his own daughter's name. Learning of this, I was pleased and thought it a good name. But now I am sorry that I myself did not give her a name.

The image of my two-year-old daughter used to flash into my mind when I was in the ranks of the guerrillas on Mt. Jiri and later, when I was in prison and thought that I would never see my family again. I regretted that I had failed to give her a name, and many nights I could not get to sleep, worried about her growing up without a father. She has now become a full-grown woman, and when I look at her with her children I am proud of her.

The "Golden Years"

When we had the great General Kim Il Sung at the helm and were building the country our people felt that all their desires had been fulfilled.

Living standards improved greatly. People were filled with hope and faith that if they worked hard their living standards would change beyond recognition and the country would be as rich and strong as any other.

The time when I worked on the Hungnam City Party Committee was called the "golden years" in our country. At that time everyone worked enthusiastically. I went to the Hungnam Fertilizer Factory and worked together with the workers there, made speeches and shared bed and board with them. Even when I skipped meals I did not feel hungry. The appearance of the workers who had been freed from all kinds of shackles and become masters of the country had changed beyond recognition.

Their joyful looks and neat attire could not have been seen before liberation. Immediately after liberation when I went to Hungnam many people wore patched clothes, but in the "golden years" nobody wore shabby clothes. The living standard of the workers was surely improving.

The following happened while I was publicizing the agrarian reform law after I was made chairman of the Ansan Sub-County Party Committee in the spring of the year after the Phungsan Party Committee was formed.

One day I made a speech in one village and then continued on to a neighbouring village. While I was making a speech there a young man with dishevelled hair appeared and asked if a speech was in progress. When I asked him where he came from he hesitated as if ashamed, and then said that he came from the village I had just visited.

"I have just been in that village. Why did you not come then?" I asked.

He did not reply, but later I learned that he could not come to the meeting place because in his family the members wore the one set of clothes in turn. As it was another family member's turn that day he had had to stay at home. When the people of his village who had listened to my speech told him the glad news, saying, "General Kim Il Sung will give us slash-and-burn farmers land too, and we will be better off," he quickly put on the only set of clothes the family had and came running to the village I had moved on to.

Then I keenly realized the poverty of the peasants in my native place. That family was not the only one that had no proper clothes. There were families that did not open their doors, ashamed of having no clothes to put on, when visitors arrived. In fact, the young man's father once bought some clothes in the market in winter and died of cold in a field on his way back home. Nothing would have happened if he had worn the clothes, but he treasured them too much and so he died, hugging them.

We gave clothes to such families by confiscating the property of the Japanese.

People's attire began to change only one year after liberation. The young man with dishevelled hair who had come panting to listen to my agitation speech provides a good example. He was called Jon Si Ho. After that event we became close friends. He attended the adult school, was admitted to the Party and enthusiastically took part in building a new country. When I was transferred to Hungnam he worked in the Party membership registration department of the Phungsan County Party Committee. When he came to Hungnam he often called at my home. Once he called on me when he came to attend a short course arranged by the provincial Party committee. I was surprised to see that he was wearing a new-style suit and that his hair was stylish and thickly greased. I was displeased, and spoke sharply: "You look as though you have dipped your head in a bucket of oil!"

Nevertheless, I was happy that he could now afford to put on a dandified appearance. The funny thing is that after he was reproved he had my mother boil water and washed his hair before he left. I did not know that that meeting with him would be the last one, as he joined the army soon afterwards and was killed by a stray bullet on the morning of July 27, 1953, the day the truce started.

Coming to Hungnam, I saw a great improvement in the clothing of the workers and felt a lump rising in my throat at the General's benevolence. All the workers with whom I talked expressed their adoration for the General, especially after he gave on-the-spot guidance at the Hungnam Fertilizer Factory on April 17, 1946.

Visiting the factory immediately after the successful completion of the agrarian reform, the General warmly grasped the hands of workers and delivered a speech in which he called upon them to consolidate the victory of the agrarian reform by sending more fertilizer to the countryside and contribute to building a rich and powerful country.

An old worker proudly said to me: "The General grasped my hands."

He went on to say, "He is very young. Our Korea is blessed. We all wept when he said that we should pay deep attention to the protection of workers and that we should make it the most important concern to protect the lives and health of workers since our workers have become the masters of the country."

Grasping his hand, I repeatedly said to myself that there was no one like our General.

My assignment in Hungnam was education of and propaganda for workers. The propaganda department of the city Party committee gave a lecture to workers every Monday morning, using materials sent by the Central Party Committee and made them study in the afternoon, dividing

them into upper and lower classes according to their levels of understanding.

When the General gave on-the-spot guidance to the Hungnam Fertilizer Factory he told the workers to study not only at school but also on the job. Party members with high levels of education were given self-study programs, for which they borrowed books from the library of the propaganda department. At set times the head of the library summoned them and examined them in the form of question and answer, and corrected any misconceptions. Their studies were mainly connected with politics and philosophy. I remember that the advanced workers who studied for several years reached a fairly high theoretical level.

By the way, high-ranking cadres were not excused from the obligation to study. There seemed to be much trouble getting the manager of the Hungnam Fertilizer Factory to study, compared to other people. He was of the same rank as the deputy chairman of the Hungnam City Party Committee. The head of the library of our propaganda department was at a loss when the director of the factory protested, saying, "Why are you interfering with the work of a busy man like me, trying to force me to study?" In fact the manager of the factory was so busy that he more often slept in his office than at home. Nevertheless, the propaganda department did not give up. The head of the library watched for a chance and put a question to the manager at a study discussion attended by the workers as well. When the manager failed to reply, he said emphatically, as if joking: "Comrade manager, if you continue to neglect study you will become like a blind man. How are you going to build a new country?"

It goes without saying that the head of the library posed a question which was not easy to answer. At any rate, the trick worked; from then on the manager of the factory could not help but follow the "study program".

In contrast, workers who did not know how to read and write were enthusiastic about studying. They had to begin by learning the Korean alphabet at the adult school and cnsistently pursue political study while working. But they studied hard and soaked up knowledge like dry earth absorbing water. Was this not because of their consciousness of being the masters of the country, which was infused in them when the General gave them land and factories and started to build the country?

Although the equipment was not good and technology was backward as yet in the Hungnam Fertilizer Factory, white fertilizer poured out like a waterfall and was sent to the countryside by train every day. The farmers who farmed their own land not only in the vicinity of Hungnam but also in

the remote areas visited the factory, bringing with them rice cakes, pork, beef and fruit in carts for the workers.

The friendship between the workers and farmers at that time was unforgettable.

On the rare occasions when I returned home after running about busying myself with increased production and study, my mother would say, with a smile, "You are no more often at home now than were under Japanese rule."

One day when I was eating a meal at home my wife, who taught at the art school, opened the door, hesitated, and then hid behind the door. I looked closely at her, wondering what the matter was with her.

She had permed her hair, and it gave her a new appearance, which seemed refined but unfamiliar. It was partly because she had changed her dress style, I supposed. I hastily said in a gruff voice: "Mother, give me a heated flat iron. I want to iron out that waved hair."

"Good heavens! You..." she said at a loss, blushing.

My mother gave me a sealed envelope instead of a flat iron. It was a letter from Kim Yong Gyo, who had gone abroad to study two years previously, when I worked in the Phungsan Party Committee.

I remember that I read the letter with great attention. In it he wrote that, thanks to the General, he was studying in the geological faculty of a certain foreign university, and threw in specific terms such as the "Paleozoic era", "Mesozoic era" and "fossil".

I was inwardly pleased and felt a lump rising in my throat at the thought that the General had taken such a measure with the great aim of raising cadres to be the pillars of a civilized, rich and powerful country in those busy days of building a party, a country and an army.

It was a really good world! It was the "golden years"! There would be no end to it if I wrote about all my recollections of those happy and joyful years. I remembered a series of endless recollections in those dark 34 years of imprisonment.

Sorrow and Resentment

While I worked to build a new country with great animation in my Hungnam days, in 1949 ominous news was heard constantly.

Around that time the press and radio reported the enemy's armed provocations almost every day.

Particularly, the enemy's large-scale armed attack on Kosan Hill in Yangyang County, Kangwon Province, and on Mt. Songak in Jangphung

County and Kuksa Hill on the Ongjin peninsula in Hwanghae Province between February and October 1949 aroused great indignation among the people of the whole country.

In September 1949 we received the sad news that the brother of Kang Hyon Chol, the deputy head of the propaganda department who had been serving in the People's Security Forces along the 38th parallel had fallen in an encounter with the enemy.

We called at Comrade Kang Hyon Chol's house and paid a silent tribute to the memory of the deceased. All of us cursed the enemy who was hell-bent on destroying our happiness, clenching our fists. We sikenbky okedged ti defebdm at the risk of our lives, great General Kim Il Sung, the symbol of the happiness of our nation and our motherland, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which he founded and was leading.

When I visited Phungsan around that time I heard that Comrade Ri Hyon Uk was seriously ill. Calling on him, I found that he was in a serious state, suffering from the aftereffects of the torture he had undergone several times under Japanese rule.

I took him without delay to my home in Hungnam. At that time Kim Si Thae, who had been the director of the Phungsan County Hospital, had been transferred to Hungnam City Hospital as its director. So I thought that with his help we could cure him of his illness. My mother and wife nursed him with devotion, and Kim Si Thae treated him, visiting my home two or three times a day. But Comrade Ri Hyon Uk was too seriously ill. At times his condition seemed to take a turn for the better. But as New Year came round it worsened beyond control, and he passed away in January 1950.

I and Kim Si Thae, who were at his bedside, wept bitterly. Now that the world we so longed for has come, why are you gone so early? we cried. It was not illness but the aftereffects of torture committed by the Japanese that killed him.

Although five years had passed since the defeat of Japan, the wounds they caused had not yet healed.

Another sorrow faced us who were already overcome with sorrow, in January 1950.

In that month the US imperialists and the Syngman Rhee puppet clique ceaselessly committed armed provocations along the 38th parallel and, at the same time, ruthlessly suppressed the anti-US patriotic struggle of the south Korean people. The hardships the comrades active in south Korea faced were beyond description.

More sad news reached us in March 1950. My friend Ju Pyong Pho was said to have been murdered in Seoul.

To think that I had lost him in the liberated motherland, who had so stubbornly fought under Japanese rule! I wept, pulling the bedclothes over my head. My mother seemed to grieve more than I; she did not eat a proper meal for several days for sorrow.

I often recalled my last meeting with him, hoping that I would meet him again in the reunified country and share joy, looking back on the old days.

I parted from him before liberation and then read his name in the newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* dated January 9, 1949. On January 8 the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK conferred the orders instituted for the first time on the revolutionary fighters, among whom was Ju Pyong Pho.

He was arrested by the counterintelligence corps in Puphyong on August 25, 1949, while active as the chairman of the Seoul City Workers' Party Committee, and was transferred to an army prison. The enemy sentenced him to death at a military trial and murdered him at Saenap Crematorium on March 17, 1950.

Going to the execution ground, he is said to have repeatedly shouted "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" "Long live the Workers' Party of Korea!" "Long live reunified independent Korea!" The news of his last moments and his will were later conveyed by his comrades. In his will he is said to have written, "Even if I die, where will my spirit go? I will remain faithful to the motherland."

Thus Ju Pyong Pho, my closest friend, an enthusiast and optimist, passed away. He was gone without treading the soil of his native place once more.

He, too, must have wanted to return to his native village. But, seeing the pro-Japanese and other traitors to the nation lording over the south even after the defeat of Japan, he must have pledged to stay and fight for a reunified independent country there. I understood his feelings, who failed to return to his native place and to his parents, wife and children, through my experience on the way to Mt. Jiri and retreat in the autumn of 1950.

Returning to Pyongyang this time, I learned the details of his death.

Recently I met Pyong Pho's daughter. She was an exact likeness of her father. She graduated from Kim Il Sung University after attending the bereaved children's school and is now working in Pyongyang. I learned that her home was in Sojang-dong, within 100 metres of my home. As I and Pyong Pho lived nearby in Phungsan and Seoul in the old days, so our children now live in the same neighbourhood.

I met his son as well. He graduated from Mangyongdae Revolutionary

School and is now working with credit for the socialist motherland. I am very happy that they are continuing their father's unfinished work, as befits the children of the bearer of the first Order of the National Flag of our country and the winner of the "National Reunification Prize".

The situation became tenser with the passage of time after we heard the news that Ju Pyong Pho had been murdered by the enemy.

Already at the beginning of 1950 the Syngman Rhee puppet clique redeployed its forces along the 38th parallel and their 100,000 strong army was preparing itself for a "northern expedition". They committed reckless provocations all along the 38th parallel and their scout planes and spies frequently penetrated the territory of the Republic.

The last momentous event in those days was when some comrades crossed the 38th parallel, taking with them the Supreme People's Assembly's appeal for peaceful reunification of the country. Several days after that, the June 25 war started.

The five years during which the universe belonged to me! I cannot record here all the joys I was blessed with then. However, I can say without hesitation that but for my life then I would not have been able to struggle for 43 years later. The five years became my mind's lodestar which enabled me to endure all the severe trials on Mt. Jiri, in prison and in the house of reformation. No threat by rifle or sword nor torture by savage executioners could put out the light of that star.

Five years are a very short period in one's life, but my life in those years firmly planted the faith in my heart that our struggle was right and that the joys like those I experienced in those five years should be spread to the whole country.

I put on a military uniform and went to the front as a war correspondent to defend the five years' joyful life after liberation which I had enjoyed as if in a dream.

4. ALL FOR VICTORY IN THE WAR

The First Days of War

War broke out on June 25, 1950. I still clearly remember after 44 years that it was a Sunday. This is not because of "the lost Sunday", "The tragic Sunday" and other coined phrases concerning the June 25 war which were dinned into my ears when I was in south Korea.

It is because June 24, the day before the war broke out, and June 25, the day it started, were respectively the last free Saturday and Sunday for me for the next 43 years. I used to recall the events of those days like dreams, facing walls stained with blood and pus during my long days in prison.

One June 24, 1950 I returned to my home in Honam-dong very late at night, nearly at dawn. The City Party Committee had received the cabinet's decision on the Three-Year National Economic Plan (1951-1953), to be carried out from the following year. This was followed by a discussion about the fulfilment of the Two-Year National Economic Plan by the Hungnam Fertilizer Factory.

The factory called on the workers of the whole country to fulfill the Two-Year National Economic Plan by the anniversary of liberation, August 15, four months ahead of schedule. It had a chance to fulfil the two-year plan ahead of schedule by July. The future orientation for propaganda work and candidates for admission to the Party from among model workers were discussed, so the meeting ended late at night. We parted, looking forward to a long rest, as the next day was Sunday.

My family were still sitting up when I got home. My mother and wife were accustomed to my returning late, but that night they seemed to be uneasy because I was unusually late. Patting Hyon Ok, who was sleeping nearest the fireplace, my wife said, "Hyon Ok will be five years old by the time the three-year plan is completed." My mother said, "Then we should buy a tricycle for her." As she had been poor all her life, it weighed upon her mind that she had never been able to afford to buy a tricycle for her son when he was a child, like the children of rich families had.

Guessing my mother's feelings, I said, "Let's buy a toy car as well." "By that time we will be able to do anything for her if we have a mind to," my wife said. It was only the two-year-old Hyon Ok who slept soundly that night.

It was nearly dawn, when we went to bed, and already the guns of war were, unknown to us, booming along the 38th parallel.

I seemed to have been asleep for only a wink when I was woken by my mother, calling, "In Mo, In Mo!" She usually called me "Hyon Ok's Father", but her tone was especially urgent. Flustered, she said, "Listen to the news. It is war!" The radio was broadcasting information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs that the south Korean puppet army had started an attack on the north across the 38th parallel.

Meanwhile, my wife was gazing at me with frightened eyes, tightly hugging our daughter.

I dressed hastily and rushed out of the house, telling my mother and wife to get ready–I do not know what I told them to get ready for!

People had already gathered at the city Party committee headquarters. When I entered the radio was repeating the message from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We only looked greetings at each other and listened tensely to the broadcast:

"Information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the DPRK.

"At dawn on June 25 the so-called national defence army of the south Korean puppet government started a surprise attack on the area north of the 38th parallel and all along the parallel. In a surprise attack, the enemy intruded one or two kilometres into the area north of the 38th parallel west of Haeju and in the direction of Cholwon.... The frontier guards of the Republic are fighting a stout defensive battle...."

All remained silent, dumbfounded at the extraordinary situation. We were all thinking, "At last it has broken out!" We knew that armed provocations had been intensified along the 38th parallel after the "national defence guards" and the "marine guards" formed by the US in south Korea in 1946 were reorganized into a regular "national defence army". In 1948 and 1949 armed provocations became armed intrusions and serious hostilities such as the battles on Mt. Songak and Mt. Unpha took place. Their armed invasions grew in scale with the passage of time, and Syngman Rhee's clamour for "unification by marching north" became louder and reached a climax in 1950.

In these circumstances, on June 11, 1950, three delegates of the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland went to Ryohyon railway station on the 38th parallel to convey an appeal concerning the proposal for the promotion of peaceful reunification of the country to political parties, public organizations and public personalities in south Korea. The south side arrested them for "illegally crossing the frontier" and threatened to court-martial them. From olden times peace envoys from the other side have always been given safe passage. Now

I think that this incident marked the declaration of the June 25 war.

Until then I and my comrades were naive enough to think that if the south side knew the real intention of the envoys its attitude would change. Moreover, on June 19 the radio broadcast the decision of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly containing the proposal to merge our Assembly and the south Korean "National Assembly" into an all-Korea unique legislative body. But the Syngman Rhee puppet clique responded with gunfire.

That evening the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced that the People's Army units and the Security Forces had beaten back the enemy who had intruded north of the 38th parallel and had gone over to the counteroffensive.

"As of June 25 the People's Army and the Security Forces of the Republic had advanced five to ten kilometres south of the 38th parallel in many regions. Fighting continues."

The day after that uneasy night General Kim Il Sung delivered a radio address to the entire people.

Everybody gathered in front of loudspeakers. The General's familiar sonorous voice was as calm and self-possessed as ever. He said that the Syngman Rhee clique had ignited a war to extend its rule, which was similar to the Japanese one, to the northern half of the Republic, deprive the peasants, the masters of the land, of their land and return it to landlords, and make the Korean people the slaves of the US imperialists.

I almost learned his address of that day by heart because, as a Party functionary, my job was to explain it to people. I particularly remembered his following remark for decades afterwards:

"Our war against the aggressive act of the traitorous Syngman Rhee clique is a just war to safeguard democracy and the freedom and independence of the country."

The General's remark that our war was a just war for the independence of the country became my faith and creed all my life.

When a south Korean journalist asked me on my release from prison over 40 years after that time: "Do you think even now that the June 25 war was a just war for the cause of national reunification?", I replied without hesitation: "Yes, I think so." The war of 1950 was really a war between the US, the pro-Japanese who had turned pro-American, flunkeyist traitors and landlords on the one side, and patriotic and democratic forces on the other. The flunkeyist and treacherous nature of Syngman Rhee's "government" can be seen from the fact that all the eight successive chiefs of staff of the southern army were former officers in the Japanese army or the puppet Manchukuo army. Already at the time of

the "Shanghai Provisional Government," Syngman Rhee was stigmatized by Sin Chae Ho as a "wickeder traitor to the nation than Ri Wan Yong", because he maintained that Korea should be placed under trusteeship.

When I was in south Korea the clamor that the June 25 war was caused by the communists of the north was dinned into my ears. To my utter astonishment, they even qualified it as a war caused by the Reds of the north on Stalin's instructions to offer Korea to the Kremlin. This is like a burglar turning on the master of the house with a club. It is lamentable that the war was characterized thus due to the interference of the UN, in which the United States commanded a majority of the votes at that time.

The liberation of Seoul on June 28, three days after the start of the war, the sweeping advance of the People's Army which liberated almost the whole area of south Korea in a little more than two months–this unprecedented victory in war is trumpeted by the south as convincing evidence to show that the north provoked the June 25 war. They said that the north was able to reach the Raktong River at one swoop because it took the initiative in starting the war.

They say that the army of south Korea was not prepared for war at that time. They say that they had not a single artillery piece, and later that they even had no army.

Strangely, they forget that at the time of June 25 the "national army" had 150,000 men, that is 50,000 more than planned.It is a historical fact that in 1949 alone the US supplied the south with over 150,000 rifles as well as ammunition, several thousand guns of different calibres, nearly 800,000 artillery shells and several thousand military vehicles, and that in 1950 the south had a navy with 99 vessels, including destroyers. Also, the air force had US-made planes.

If the south was so helpless how could Dulles, who inspected the 38th parallel just before the war, say, "No enemy, however strong he may be, will be able to withstand you?"

Were the several thousand armed men who attacked Mt. Songak and Mt. Unpha not an army? Were they not guns that they fired? History furnishes not a few examples for aggressors collapsing like mud walls at the first counterstrike.

In 1959, when I was in Pusan after being released from my first confinement to prison, I leafed through the magazine *Arirang*. In it I came across a photograph of a female soldier on a US-made tank. The caption read: "I would like to push straight up to Pyongyang." This reminded me of what Syngman Rhee and Kim Sok Won said on the eve of June 25–"breakfast in Haeju, lunch in Pyongyang and supper in Sinuiju".

But the cause of the war should be sought in the fact that the US, the

pro-Japanese and pro-US forces, that is, outside forces, the flunkeyist traitorous forces and landlords on the one side were opposed to the patriotic forces on the other.

North Korea came to get a clear idea of the true colors of the Syngman Rhee clique through the aggressive acts of the puppet army, which often intruded into the area north of the 38th parallel–not through propaganda. In the period from January to September 1949, for instance, over 50,000 men from the southern army invaded the area north of the 38th parallel 432 times and caused damage to 136 ri, 45 sub-counties and 13 counties. Southern planes and vessels intruded more than 100 times. There is no doubt that, but for counterattacks by the Security Forces of the Republic each time, the puppet army would have pushed up to the Amnok and Tuman Rivers.

The war had as good as already started in 1949.

Frequent invasions by several thousands of soldiers equipped with up-to-date weapons, with an area of several thousand square kilometres turned into battlefields and with a heavy toll of lives – All this meant not simple armed conflicts but a war. I reiterate that the war had already started in 1949, so it can be said that June 25 only served as an occasion for the People's Army and Security Forces to launch a counterattack.

The firing of guns on June 25 made our resentment explode. It was unprecedented resentment against those who wanted to bring back a dark era like the period of Japanese rule, to deprive us of our land, our factories and our country and, to replace the happy "golden years" with slavery. This resentment was converted into terrible strength, and brought about the unprecedented lightning speed of advance with which nearly the whole area of south Korea was liberated in a little over two months.

In those days I had no trouble to speak of in my propaganda work. The slogan "All for victory in the war!" and the General's radio address sufficed for me. The General clarified the nature of the war in a few plain words. His radio address aroused the whole country.

In fact, I had trouble calming down those who volunteered for the front. If they had been left to do as they wanted all the factories in Hamhung City would have been deserted within a few days. Some people complained, saying, "How can we remain behind and simply work when the US imperialists and Syngman Rhee want to bring back a dark era like that of Japanese rule?" I persuaded them, saying that supporting the front by discharging one's duty with credit was as important as fighting at the front. But, frankly speaking, I, too, wanted to go to the front. I asked the chairman of the city Party committee several times to let me go, but each time I was turned down. He said, "If you, the head of the

propaganda department, are in such a mood, how can you carry out propaganda work properly?" I was lost for words.

While the days passed in this way, Comrade Kang Hyon Chol was sent to the front. In the meantime, he had been overcome with sorrow over the death of his younger brother, who had served in the 38th parallel guards. The comrades who sent him off could hardly conceal their envy. We said to him: "Let's meet again on the day of victory", to which he responded with the same words. At that time that was what those who left for the front as well as those who gave them send-offs said as they bade farewell to each other. "The day of victory", of course, meant the day of reunification. We believed that the day of reunification was not far off. In fact there is no doubt that but for the United States that belief would have been realized.

In July US planes started to bomb Hungnam, both populated areas and factories.

My mother, who witnessed the bomb damage, wept bitterly, saying, "They are not human beings." Many peaceful inhabitants, including women and children, were killed and injured, and many houses were destroyed.

The day after the bombing the radio reported that at the sea battle off Jumunjin four torpedo boats of the north Korean Navy had sunk a medium-sized US cruiser and damaged another light cruiser.

My mother asked me how big a cruiser was. I explained that a cruiser is big enough to be called a "floating island" and that during the Pacific War even the Japanese torpedo boats could not sink a cruiser. Mother heaped curses upon the enemy, saying "Why do they behave like that, coming to our country? Why don't they go back across the sea and live in their own country?" and suddenly pressed Hyon Ok to her breast. Still vivid in my memory is the image of my mother hugging young Hyon Ok with her trembling hands.

One day Song Jung Myong, who had worked together with me in Phungsan, called on me. He had dropped in on his way to the front, he said. He was short in stature and so reticent that people often did not notice his presence. I was very glad to meet him, but we had no time even to share reminiscences. At departure we firmly grasped each other's hands, promising to "meet again on the day of victory". We did not imagine that we would meet not on the day of victory but on Mt. Jiri, where grim trials were in store for us.

The war gradually became fiercer. The United States threw in their ground army to the front on a full scale and the Hungnam area was steadily destroyed by US bombers and shells from US warships. But

incessant news of victory at the front consolidated our confidence in victory despite painful sacrifices.

I heard the news of the battle for the liberation of Taejon, in which the US 24th Division was destroyed and its commander, General Dean, captured. The next day I was recalled by the Central Committee of the Party. At last I, too, was to go to the front.

My Mother and My Wife

On the morning of July 23, 1950, on the day I left for Pyongyang, my wife shed tears at the door hugging the two-year-old Hyon Ok while I was putting my shoes on in the entrance hall. Although she had become a mother, she was still young and such a parting was the first for her. The previous night she had promised not to weep at my departure, but when I opened the door and was going out she could not restrain herself any more and shed tears.

But my mother said, staunchly: "Sun Im, don't cry. When I was only 18 years old his father died, and seven months later I gave birth to a posthumous son. I have maintained my purity ever since, pinning my hopes on my son all along. Heaven will not be indifferent, and he will surely return after victory is won."

I wonder if my return after 43 years was attributable to my mother's blessing that day.

My wife, still shedding tears, followed me to the gate. I whispered to her at the gate:

"If I do not return, don't grow old and lonely like my mother; find a good match."

I seriously meant what I said. Anyone who had watched the torments of his widowed mother who maintained her purity from her youth would have told his wife the same thing at such a moment, I believe.

"Why do you say that?" she gasped, tearfully.

"You will not forget me wherever you go. Neither will I forget you," she said.

I said to calm her: "Don't worry, I will return after victory is won. We will have Hyon Ok's next birthday party in our reunified country."

I really believed that I would enter this gate again in a few months' time, after I returned from Mt. Halla (on Jeju Island, the southernmost part of the Korean peninsula).

So I said nothing special to my mother standing in the entrance hall when I bowed to her silently at last.

She stood there dry-eyed, but there was a hardened, tearful expression on her face and she kept her mouth tightly shut as if to control her trembling lips. But her eyes were rivetted to my face. When they met mine she nodded as if to tell me to leave.

Her fortitude made it much easier for me to depart. If she had wept at my departure my steps would have been very heavy.

"You didn't know, but when you passed out of sight, your mother turned her face and wept for a long time."

I heard these words from my wife only a few days after my return home.

That was my last parting from my mother. Even now when I close my eyes, her tearful hardened expression occurs to me and aches my heart. If I had known then that it was departure meaning separation of 43 years and an eternal parting....

If I had known that, I would have departed resolutely and my mother would have sent me off with fortitude, keeping back her tears. It is because it was the path to be taken by the sons of this land and the torment to be put up with by mothers of this land for the reunified independent motherland.

How many mothers inspired fortitude in the minds of their departing sons and soothed their tormented hearts in those days!

It seems to me that I see in my mother's image kept in my memory the images of many other mothers who reared heroes in this land. The word "Mother" is equivalent to the word "hero", for they sent their dear sons and daughters to the front for the reunification and independence of the country.

It pained my heart that my mother passed away without hearing any news of her son. Mother said to her last moments: "My In Mo will surely return," I am told.

It is a small consolation to me that in the evening of her life she became the head of a unit of the people's neighbourhood and passed the rest of her life satisfactorily. She used to make the rounds of the neighbourhood at dawn and take upon herself all people's extra housework and chores without sparing any pains, and so was called a "communist mother". She picked up groceries for couples who went out to work and fetched children from the nursery or kindergarten. She did her best to do the share of the work of her absent son. My wife attended on her with devotion and waited for me for 43 years. When I look at the face lined with wrinkles and the gray hair of my wife, who maintained her chastity bringing up her only daughter who did not even know what her father looked like, I am assailed by endless reminiscences. When I look at my

wife I am reminded in spite of myself of jailors who remarked in amazement: "How is it that all the wives of communists are virtuous women?"

When I think of the faith and constancy of my mother and wife I unwittingly look up at a scroll hanging from the wall which bears the autograph of the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il. The inscription reads, "Our Party does not forget Comrade Ri In Mo, the incarnation of faith and will". The faith of Comrade Kim Jong Il, who is said to have remarked that Ri In Mo should be returned to the embrace of our Party at all costs, and the fatherly leader, who believed in and waited for me without forgetting me for 43 years, saved my mother from despair and made my wife a virtuous woman. The wives of communists are all exemplary women, because all Korean communists were brought up by General Kim Il Sung and Comrade Kim Jong Il, who had such faith and endurance. I would like to reply in these words to south Korea's jailors.

I found such trust and endurance in my late maternal uncle as well. According to my wife, he used to console my mother and her, saying, "In Mo is not dead. He is alive and will surely return," even when he had heard no news of me at all. The trust of my uncle, who loved me as his own son and led me to the road of struggle, even now warms my heart.

My wife is at this moment seated beside me. She does not leave my side even for a moment, and looks over my shoulder at what I am writing or writes down what I dictate to her. She sometimes disapproves of the old-fashioned words in my writing, so I try to improve them in modern style, because it is the note of the struggles of my comrades rather than my own and also the note about their trust and waiting.

When I raise my head while writing, given to the reminiscences of the past, I feel as if my mother were seated on the sofa in the room and nodding, saying, "We believed in you. We believed that you were alive and would return."

To the Front!

I arrived in Pyongyang on the following day. I could see at once that Pyongyang had suffered heavier bombing than the Hungnam area. Many streets which had become familiar with me when the Party merger congress was held and when I attended the Central Party School were reduced to rubble. As soon as I arrived the air raid alarm was sounded and I had to go straight into a basement which was used as an air-raid shelter. When I emerged after the bombing I found that another street had been reduced to ruins.

However, the citizens went about their business in a lively manner. Children marched, singing lustily *Let's Join the People's Army*. Everywhere there were maps on which the liberated areas of south Korea were marked with red flags.

I called at the Central Party Committee headquarters without delay, and was told to go immediately to the department of culture of the People's Army. There I was informed that I had been appointed a war correspondent of the Central News. It seemed that a comrade from Phungsan who dealt with newspaper affairs in the department of culture of the People's Army had recommended me for the job, remembering that *Adong-Tong-A* carried a nursery rhyme I wrote when I attended primary school in Phungsan. He firmly grasped my hands, saying, "Please write and send many good items."

As a war correspondent of the People's Army, thus, I left for the front. Here I refer to the story of a nursery rhyme carried by *Adong-Tong-A* of old days which by no means deserves to be boasted of, because I want to put an end to the many doubtful controversies conducted for 43 years in south Korea as to whether I was a war correspondent or not.

At that time the front had narrowed down to the area along the north side of the Rakdong River. I helped to load ammunition on to a lorry and then climbed aboard it to journey to Seoul from Pyongyang.

The road was packed with other lorries and carts laden with war supplies destined for the front. Although the villages on both sides of the road were almost all reduced to ruins, carts loaded with war supplies emerged from them constantly, and the lusty singing voices of children were heard. "This really is a war waged by the whole people," I thought.

On arrival in Seoul, I was informed that the Sixth Division of the People's Army to which I was assigned had already advanced in the direction of Jinju. Seoul, which had been liberated on June 28, was bustling with life. The bills advertising a performance of the People's Army's Song and Dance Ensemble in the Pumin Hall were impressive. Columns of dozens or hundreds of young people could be seen marching in the streets, singing. They were volunteers for military service. They sang the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* and *Let's Join the People's Army* at the tops of their voices. I have no idea where or when they learned those songs. To those who were seeing them off, they waved and said, "Let's meet again on the day of victory." The greetings exchanged in those days in the north and the south were the same. It was a time when the north and the south were reunified.

Seoul was quite different from the Seoul of old days, when the Japanese and the pro-Japanese elements lorded it over the people there.

Shops and stalls were busy changing their English signs into Korean ones. It can be said that for the first time they were washing off the dirt the erstwhile capital of the Ri dynasty had accumulated in the feudal days and at the time Korea was a Japanese colony.

Looking around liberated Seoul, I badly missed Ju Pyong Pho. If he had had been alive, how emotional our meeting would have been!

But the place for a war correspondent is the front line, so I left for the south without delay.

At that time vehicles only moved at night because travelling in the daytime was dangerous on account of bombing by US planes. In the daytime the lorry was put under cover, and I collected materials from the nearby villages. The fields by the road ravaged by the war were littered with burnt-out lorries and wrecked guns the fleeing US and puppet troops had thrown away.

When I read in south Korean publications that the "national army" had no guns at the time of June 25, I could not help laughing, reminded of that scene. Mathew Ridgway, who succeeded Douglas MacArthur as commander of the UN forces, actually wrote to that effect. Looking at a photograph, of him with a grenade dangling before his breast and dressed like an Indian chieftain, I thought in spite of myself: "He is good at telling lies." Later I heard that he held the position of commander of the NATO forces. He told such lies many times.

When I reached Phyongthaek I saw a farmer trying to remove a wheel from a cannon which had turned over in ditch. When I asked him the reason, he replied that he intended to use it as a wheel for a cart. He added, "It is just the thing for a cart wheel. The Yankees are very good at making wheels." If they had heard a Korean farmer's opinion about the field guns they made, would the people of the company which made them have felt pleased? "Only when cart wheels are firm is it possible to support the front. When all the Yankees are driven out I would like to do farming on my own land," the farmer remarked. When I asked him whether he had received any land, he produced a certificate of land distribution to show me, instead of a reply. He said that he had received the land without paying a penny for it. At the time of Syngman Rhee's so-called land reform he was deeply in debt, but this time he had become well off, he said.

In another village I saw several farmers holding stakes. Going nearer, I saw an old, seemingly learned, man in their midst who was writing with a writing brush the name of the owner of a piece of land, and the size of dry and paddy fields on a stake. The stake was to be driven in at the edge of the relevant patch of land. The slogan "Land to the tillers!" was

put up at the roadside. I felt as if I were in my native village four years previously. "This is a true agrarian reform; Syngman Rhee's land reform only increased poverty", they said. They called Syngman Rhee "Ro Syngman" meaning that he was old and senile. This showed how much he was hated by the people.

Wherever I went I could see the new appearance of south Korea, where agrarian and other democratic reforms were being carried out.

By the way, I narrowly escaped being killed on the way to the front. We were racing toward Taejon past Phyongthaek without headlights on, on account of US planes' bombing. Lorry plunged into a bomb crater on the road.

I was trapped under a crushing load of ammunition boxes and thought that my last moments had come. But another lorry stopped, and the soldiers in it rescued me and pulled our lorry out of the crater. One of them joked, "You can't die here. We haven't reached the south coast yet." Another soldier said that I would probably enjoy a long life because I had narrowly escaped death. His prediction seems to have been right.

We continued our journey and reached Jinju in South Kyongsang Province, which was on the front line at the time.

In all the local villages agrarian reform was being carried out at the instance of the rural committee under the guidance of the people's committee. The agrarian reform, based on the principle of confiscation and distribution without compensation, was the most important undertaking carried out in the liberated area. It was a chief item for me to cover. When I saw enthusiastic peasants active in the rural committees in the villages near Jinju I was reminded of the simple people in Phungsan who happily carried out agrarian reform four years ago.

The images of the comrades who, together with me, had busied themselves with agrarian and other democratic reforms day and night occurred to me as well. I wondered how all of them were faring. At the thought that most of them must have gone to the front as I did, the belief came to me that I would meet them again on the south coast on the day of victory.

When I was gathering news in a village a farmer called Old Pak pressed me to go to his home, where he served me noodles. Now I had been very keen on noodles back home, where they are served cold, and these noodles seemed cold too. But when I took a mouthful I found that they were fiery hot! They were served in hot meat soup, but the oil covering the soup prevented the steam from rising, so they did not seem to be hot. I learned that in Jinju hot noodles were regarded as a token of cordial hospitality. It sounds somewhat paradoxical that people in Phungsan,

a cold place, like cold noodles whereas in Jinju, a warm place, they like hot noodles, but it is a fact.

Whenever I think of Jinju noodles nowadays I cannot help laughing, remembering that I felt as if I had swallowed fire. This warms my heart, reminding me of the warm hospitality of those who gladly met and welcomed us.

The war gradually became fiercer and the front line moved. The following event took place when the Sixth Division was stationed in Sachon in South Kyongsang Province. I was heading towards the bridge over the Nam River on my way from the department of culture of the division in Jinju, when, just as I was about to cross the bridge, I sighted US planes approaching in formation. They were obviously coming to bomb the bridge. I ran into a field and covered myself with an old iron smelting cauldron. When the bombing was over I found that I was black all over because of the soot from the cauldron.

I took off and washed my clothes in the river. As they were drying I sat and thought of the war. At the sight of the destroyed bridge and columns of smoke rising from villages here and there I was suddenly seized with hatred of the Yankees. I did not know then that the troops of not only the US, "the strongest in the world", but also those of 15 other countries would soon overrun our country and the war would last for three years. Nor did I suspect that I would meet my wife and friends again only after a long interval of over 40 years.

Comrade Kim Who Died an Untimely Death

One day when our People's Army was pushing the front line to the southeast in sweltering heat and under attack from enemy planes, I read an item in a black frame in the *Rodong Sinmun*, which had arrived one week late on account of the disruption of the war. It was an obituary issued by the Central Committee of the Party. It said that Comrade Kim, an old revolutionary who had been engaged in the communist movement since Japanese rule had been murdered by the Syngman Rhee clique of traitors.

I cannot find words to properly express my feelings of that time. To think that Comrade Kim who had not succumbed even under Japanese colonial rule had been murdered after the Japanese imperialists had been defeated! The image of Ju Pyong Pho as well as of Comrade Kim flashed into my mind. Why had they to die now, who did not die when they faced the rifles and swords of the Japanese? The bullets which

killed them were fired by Korean traitors, but it was the US which killed them. I again keenly felt the need to drive out the US imperialists and reunify the country.

I became acquainted with Comrade Kim through Ju Pyong Pho before liberation, when he was the main figure connected with the communist group in the Seoul area.

Comrade Kim was born into a poor landless peasant family in Chungju County, North Chungchong Province. He came to sympathize with communism through his experience in life and joined the ranks of militants. He was arrested by the Syngman Rhee clique and was murdered after having been subjected to all kinds of torture at dawn on June 27, when the People's Army was approaching Seoul. If he had lived one day more he would have tasted the joy of the liberation of Seoul on June 28.

I met him twice at the lodgings in Chungsin-dong in Seoul, where I lived together with Ju Pyong Pho before liberation. He very much wanted to know about our struggle in Phungsan. I think that his interest in Phungsan meant that he was interested in the anti-Japanese guerrilla force led by General Kim Il Sung and in the organization of the ARF. After liberation he waged a vigorous struggle against US colonial rule in south Korea.

A south Korean publication wrote about his death as follows:

"Kim Chang Ryong, head of the army counterintelligence corps and gendarmes under him tied him to a pine tree near a stream 150 metres away from the gate of the provost marshal's headquarters. Although bound, he turned his body northward and raised his handcuffed hands three times.

"His last gesture was to silently hold up his handcuffed hands high three times."

The south Korean press kept silent as to why he held up his handcuffed hands at his last moment, looking towards the northern sky after he had been struck in the mouth with a rifle butt so that he could not shout patriotic slogan. I myself more than once saw such a gesture on the part of comrades in prison. They wanted to go to Pyongyang, see the sky over the city and cry, "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" at the tops of their voices at the banquet in honour of reunification....

Returning to the north, I came to learn the details of the last moments and the will of Comrade Kim, as well as the whereabouts of his wife and daughters.

Comrade Kim is said to have told the military prosecutors:

"You clique of traitors! You sold the country to the Japanese imperial-

ists yesterday and now to the US imperialists. How dare you try patriots and communists?"

The will he left the day before he was executed was smuggled out by the comrades in the next cell to his. In it he said that it weighed upon his mind that he could not attend the banquet in honour of reunification in the presence of the General, that he could not attend on the General to his last moment and that he had not lived up to the General's trust and expectation. A message to his wife said, "If you are released alive from prison, please go to Pyongyang where the General is, taking our children with you."

She set out for the north after Seoul was liberated on June 28, although she was near her time.

Since then, Comrade Kim's wife and daughters have lived under the care and concern of the General. He sent her to a hospital so that she could recover from the effects of the torture she had suffered in prison. During the strategic temporary retreat he helped her travel and even sent her quilts.

After the war she was given a flat in a modern apartment building beneath Moran Hill. She now lives in a high-rise apartment building in Ryusong-dong in the Central District. The General more than once met her and told her: "Mr. Kim was a patriot who fought well in south Korea."

His two daughters attended Kim Il Sung University and the University of Foreign Studies, respectively, after graduating from Namsan Middle School under the care of the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il. They are now discharging their duties creditably in Party and state organs.

Comrade Kim is laid to rest in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery in Sinmi-ri, Hyongjesan District. His white granite gravestone bears the inscription "A south Korean revolutionary" written in red letters.

The flunkeyist traitorous clique and rabid anticommunists destroyed his actual grave, but he enjoys eternal life in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery in Pyongyang.

The land where revolutionaries enjoy eternal life is my motherland. I hope that the southern half of my country will soon become a genuine part of the homeland, where my comrades who laid down their lives for the country and nation will enjoy everlasting peace.

At the Crossroads of Fate

In mid-August 1950 the troops of the People's Army began to cross the Rakdong River. On August 7 the Sixth Division, to which I was

attached, foiled a counterattack by 24,000 US soldiers and hundreds of tanks and guns.

Here I would like to mention the battle for Height 342, called Jjokjebi (weasel) Height.

The US Fifth Regiment was entrenched on Jjokjebi Height. When they were hard pressed by battalions of the People's Army, a US marine brigade was dispatched there, but it was wiped out before it could even get into position to use its firepower. The units of the People's Army, which had been surrounding the height, had driven the enemy up toward the top of the height and, when the US marine brigade approached, they opened fire from the mountain ridge.

Two-thirds of the water and munitions designed to supply from the air to the US troops trapped on the top of the height fell on the positions occupied by the People's Army. The KPA soldiers called the enemy planes "suppliers".

The People's Army also won a great victory in a battle on the road passing through Pongam-ri, annihilating US field artillery battalions. Another great victory was won in Sichon, where a US marine battalion was routed.

When the People's Army crossed the Rakdong River, US planes bombed it every day in what the US called the heaviest bombing since the Normandy landing during World War II. The narrow area behind the Rakdong River was packed with the troops of 15 countries, including the US soldiers and the puppet army, which had retreated.

In this situation on September 15, 1950 the US armed forces landed in Inchon after suffering heavy casualties for three days. Because of the disparity in the balance of forces, the KPA started a temporary retreat.

I acted together with the soldiers of the Sixth Division of the KPA. The enemy's bombing forced us to retreat, which we did at night while moving weapons which had been concealed. It pained us greatly to retreat northward after having advanced almost to within hailing distance of the South Sea. Some soldiers insisted on fighting to the last there. Every soldier shed tears, and many expressed the determination to become guerrillas in the mountains. I knew that certain government organs, including the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee, had retreated into the mountains to continue the struggle from there.

Under these circumstances I was faced with the alternative of going north across the Thaebaek Mountain Range or remaining in the south and waging guerrilla warfare. To tell the truth, I wanted to go back to the north, as I missed my mother and wife. But I could not go, because the United States, called "the strongest country in the world", had divided my

motherland. I remembered my 15 years of struggle against Japanese imperialism. Only five years had past since the Japanese imperialists had withdrawn, and now we had to fight US imperialism. I was reminded of the promises I had made about meeting again on the day of victory when I parted from my comrades. When I was given a task by the Party, I said, "I will return after victory." Victory meant national reunification. There can be no hope of achieving independence and national reunification without driving out the foreign forces. I thought, "How can I face my mother and wife, and my comrades, and look up at the sky over Pyongyang before winning victory? How can I tread my native land again before achieving national reunification?"

Then the thought of Ju Pyong Pho came to me. Why did he fight in Seoul and lay down his life without returning home even after the defeat of the Japanese? I could finally understand.

Standing at the crossroads, I looked back on my 34 years and thought of my seniors and comrades who had gone before me. I recalled the days when I went from Phungsan to Changbai and then to Longjing, the days when I went up and down carrying the *Ten-Point Program of the ARF* in my bosom, and my Tokyo days as well. I recalled my life in the five years after liberation, which had passed like a day, the start of war, which had broken up my family life, and the United States and the flunkeyist clique of traitors who stood in our way when we advanced within hailing distance of the South Sea and national reunification. I made up my mind: "Now I must take up a rifle instead of a pen."

The dream of becoming a guerrilla that I had cherished since I heard the gunfire at Phabal-ri thus came true.

I left the retreating units of the Sixth Division and made for Mt. Jiri alone.

5. MOUNT JIRI

After being released from prison at the end of 1988 I read some books such as *Mount Jiri* , *Southern Army* and others depicting the activities of guerrilla forces on Mount Jiri. So did most of my comrades, I believe. It would be natural for men who had served over 30 years of confinement since they had been captured while fighting on Mount Jiri and jailed to be anxious to know how the history of those days was perceived by the people outside the prison walls. My comrades who read the above-mentioned books were all indignant. So am I. Why?

When a film adapted from *Southern Army* was shown in Seoul, two young men from a trade union visited one of my old comrades with the surname of Han. Han had fought as a guerrilla in the Kyongnam Unit on Mount Jiri from 1950 to 1954, when he was captured. The young men said, "The film described the guerrillas as harassed, hungry, cold and miserable. For what on earth did they die?"

Han replied, "That book and the film based on it do not give a correct answer to that question. Instead, phrases such as 'mocked by fate' and 'crushed by the wheel of history' are completely misleading. Perhaps that may have been the intention of the publication of the book. When I struggled on Mount Jiri, arms in hand, I was a young man in my twenties just like you. The reason why I took up arms was simply to establish a government in which the people would be the masters of the country. Now the word 'people' is not used in the south, but then it implied all men and women except pro-Japanese elements, traitors to the nation, compradore capitalists, vicious landlords, evil religionists and the like. The people, who had been maltreated and plundered by the Japanese imperialists for over 40 years, greeted liberation with great excitement. However, even in the liberated motherland pro-Japanese elements revived and behaved arrogantly, backed by the United States. Such being the case, the people's ardent wish to live under a government where they were the masters was stronger than their will to live. Why is it so hard to understand?"

This cry representing the voices of the sons and daughters of the fatherland whose bones are buried on Mount Jiri was also mine. It was a low but furious cry.

My comrades, who had fallen in hails of bullets, shouted, "Long live the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea!", "Long live General Kim Il Sung!", picturing in their minds the land under the far-off northern sky as a utopia and hoping for the advent of a society where the people would be the masters, a society where there would be neither foreign forces nor worshippers of great powers nor betrayers of the country. They fought for a reunified and independent country – the people's Korea.

That was a war between servility and independence, between flunkeyism and patriotism.

The bullets the south Korean army and policemen fired in those days were aimed at the national spirit, an independent and patriotic spirit which was burgeoning in this land. My comrades and I were neither "those mocked by fate" nor "those crushed by the wheel of history". We struggled and bled for our fatherland and to create our own history, and some of us laid down their lives. Blood and death devoted to a sacred cause can by no means be futile.

When I was in south Korea I had a plan to write my memoirs because I could not sit silent without telling the truth about Mount Jiri.

However, here I did not want to write about the history of the guerrilla army. That is a historian's job. I only want to write about the comrades I met,. got acquainted with and fought together with there. I think it is the duty of survivors to make known to the world for what and how they fought and sacrificed their youth.

I fear lest these memoirs should be a memorial address for my comrades. For them it would be right to sing a paean or a hymn, instead of reading a memorial address. Their memorial address must be reserved untold until the day of reunification, when the north and the south are integrated into one, and when a people's society is established in this land. Not until the blue sky shines over their unified motherland will their eyes close....

Into the Mountains

All the organs which had conducted their public activities in different regions during July-September – the Hadong, Sanchong and Jinyang County Party Committees, including the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee, people's committees of all areas, Party-affiliated organizations such as the Women's Union, Peasants' Union and Democratic Youth League – went to Mount Jiri and settled there in the period of the strategic temporary retreat. They were the very predecessors of the guerrilla forces there which had once made the Samnam area (three provinces in the southern part of Korea) astir with their brisk actions for

several years. Their resolution was that they would not live again under the control of the United States and traitors to the nation who were servile to great powers, even though they might fight with only grass to eat. They prepared to fight the enemy in company with the People's Army when it returned to build a reunified country in which a society for the people would be set up. They became the guerrillas of Mount Jiri. The peaks, high and low, of the mountain seethed with the resolution to struggle against the US and its puppet government.

To join the guerrillas I went first to Sedong village in Machon Sub-County, Hamyang County, where the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee was based.

The provincial Party committee officials were examining the volunteers for the guerrilla army. They asked them their ages, places of birth and former work places. The last question was why they wanted to join the guerrilla unit. They all said that they wanted to become guerrillas to drive out the US imperialists and the Syngman Rhee clique of traitors, and let the whole territory of Korea belong to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea led by General Kim Il Sung.

A young man of slightly over 20 said, sobbing: "I'm the only one of my family left. My father and eldest brother were killed struggling against the May 10 separate election held by Syngman Rhee; my mother and second-oldest brother were slaughtered by the enemy because they voted for the DPRK in the August general election. Even if I die, I will die fighting for the Republic." His remark reminded me of the radio report that 77.62 percent of voters in south Korea participated secretly in the August general election before the war and voted for the DPRK. This figure was dyed with the blood of millions of voters. The people who took to Mount Jiri were all people who had cast ballots for the DPRK in the August general election. So they regarded the DPRK not as a separate country set up north of the 38th parallel but one they had built in their native land. In other words, the DPRK was their genuine homeland.

The young man passed the examination, of course. Comrade An, the examiner, encouraged him, saying as he clasped his hand firmly: "Let's fight well for General Kim Il Sung and our Republic." I was very pleased at the thought that I could fight together with such a man. However I was rejected because I was not physically fit enough. The examiner remained deaf to my eager supplications. So I parted from the young man before learning his name, and I never saw him again. I believe he would have fought courageously to the last.

When I pleaded with Comrade An again he said, "Guerrilla action is out of the question for an unhealthy man." I think that it was the fact that I

wore glasses that made him regard me as unhealthy. Later he was arrested and served a long term in prison. In the 1960s I met him in Taejon prison. I still harbored resentment against him for refusing to allow me to join the guerrillas, but he apologized at that time. He died of sclerosis of the liver in 1987, still in Taejon prison.

Disappointed at my failure in the examination, I decided to visit the county Party committee the next day, since it was selecting people to organize a guerrillas unit under its command. Having been told that the Jinyang County Party Committee was located in the valley leading to Taewon Temple, I trudged along the mountain path leading to it. Near the boundary of Machon Sub-County I came across Comrade Kim Yong Jun, the deputy commander in charge of cultural affairs of the Sixth Division, and his group. He was the one who, in the period of Japanese imperialist rule, had advised my ailing mother to eat crow's meat, and she got better because of his advice. They were on their way to Sedong village, which I had just left. I told him of my failure to join the guerrillas, and he advised me, with a care-worn face: "You should do as the Centre directs."

I was chagrined at this, but I was still determined, and replied: "Now that I've entered the mountains, I'll live a mountain life."

Just then, a man beside Comrade Kim suddenly raised his voice: "You must do as you were told, and retreat. Why are you so impudent that you won't listen to orders?"

He was Ri Ku Hun, director of the Peasants Department of the Central Party Committee. In previous days, too, I remembered, he had often behaved arrogantly, abusing his authority. I was annoyed that even at this critical time he was as irritating as ever, and retorted: "I'll remain in the mountains. I've made up my mind after having deliberated on how to help our orderly retreat. I am disgusted at your bureaucratic attitude, abusing the authority of the Centre!"

Comrade Kim dissuaded me from arguing any more. Ri Ku Hun turned his face away, scowling.

I then headed for Ssukbat Pass leading to Samjang Sub-County of Sanchong County, from Machon along a deep valley.

That was my last meeting with Comrade Kim Yong Jun. Later I heard that he and his men had been massacred by south Korean troops at the base of the North Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee. They encountered the south Korean troops making a besiege. In that battle Kim Yong Jun and his party fought sacrificingly, but failed to break through the siege of the enemy owing to the diametrical difference in forces. When I thought of Comrade Kim Yong Jun I felt sorry for the loss of one of Korea's best doctors. At the same time I remembered that Comrade Ri Ku Hun, though

he had been on bad terms with me, had also been a worker for our Party, and so I was sad at his death, too. Their lives had been dedicated to the Party's cause and the country's reunification, after all.

As I climbed Ssukbat Pass the sun sank, so I took refuge in a solitary farmhouse. There was a stranger already there, who explained that he was a member of a political working corps from the peasants' union of South Hamgyong Province and that he was on his way to retreat to the north.

We talked far into the night. When I got up in the morning I found his bed empty; Since I said that I would stay there, he had slipped away without saying a word.

It took me all day to reach the top of Ssukbat Pass. There I saw a pillbox. It had been built by the south Korean police before the war to combat the guerrillas.

Perhaps that Jiri Mountains became a base of guerrilla action must be from the time when the fighters of Ryosu People's Resistance started with the mutiny of the 14th Regiment of the south Korean army in 1948.

During several years since then the guerrilla forces in Mount Jiri suffered a serious loss while fighting against the subjugation of south Korean army and policemen, but did not yield to. In March 1949 I had read an article carried in the *Rodong Sinmun* about the guerrillas on Mount Jiri, who smashed the enemy's "winter punitive operation". That article lingered fresh in my memory, for it was sent to me by Mr Kim in south Korea, I think.

No sooner had the People's Army liberated that region than the guerrillas came out of the mountains and devoted themselves to the democratic reforms and other affairs of the newly set up people's power organs.

However, just over 30 days later they had to go back to the mountains and engage in guerrilla warfare once more. Then I realized how arduous the struggle was for the country's reunification. At the thought of "But for the United States..." my fists trembled.

Crossing the Ssukbat Pass, I descended in the direction of Taewon Temple, where I met some young people looking after about 20 cows. They explained that soldiers of the People's Army in the Sachon and Kosong areas had found the cows wandering unsupervised. They had used them to carry their ammunition, but, finding that the mountain path was becoming too rocky and steep, the KPA soldiers had requested the youngsters to return the cows to their owners.

This reminded me of an incident I saw on a road near Taejon: A young lieutenant of the KPA was killed while rescuing a child during a

bombing raid by enemy planes. Blood oozed out of the chest of the fallen officer, the child held in his arms. The child, as if sensing what had happened to him, was crying in a choking voice: "Uncle!" When I wrote an account of this incident soon afterwards I was sobbing too.

The cows had been abandoned when their owners had fled in search of refuge. So, if the men of the KPA, short of provisions, had butchered them, who could have blamed them? However, it was part of the KPA's ethics that lost property should be returned to its owner. Then I scrutinized once again the meaning of the words "People's Army". They meant an army defending the people's lives and property. The KPA men's noble personalities did not change whether they were advancing south or retreating north.

Looking back on those days induces me to think about the virtue of unity between the army and the people now displayed in all parts of the Republic. We can read about it in newspapers and see it on the TV screen every day. The people and the army have relations which can be summed up as "Our school – our sentry post" or "Our sentry post – our farm" or "Our factory – our sentry post", and help and respect each other. In particular this trait is developing into a social campaign since the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il was appointed the Supreme Commander of the KPA. Recollecting, in such an atmosphere, an anecdote about the virtue of unity between the people and the army displayed 43 years ago, stirring emotions, aroused fresh pride in me.

The young people with the cows told me that the county Party committee had moved to a place about eight kilometres from Taewon Temple. When I finally reached the Jinyang County Party Committee I met its chairman and told him that I had been turned down when I had applied to be a guerrilla. I asked him to accept me into the guerrilla unit directed by the county Party committee. His first reaction was to tell me to go to the kitchen for a meal. After I had eaten a meal I was called to see the chairman. I went, hoping that I would be enlisted in the guerrilla unit. But be said, "We are moving to Phyongchon village, so I'd like you to stay and look after the cattle here."

He explained that as it was impossible to find the owners of the cows in Sachon and Kosong he was thinking of distributing them to peasants who had no cattle, adding that I must look after the cattle until then. I could not understand whether this was my first task as a guerrilla or whether I had been rejected as a guerrilla once again.

The county Party committee shifted to the village, leaving us behind in the mountains – three of us hailing from north Korea and two locals. Anyone who has experienced solitary mountain life knows that it makes one

long for a lively village. I had stayed behind in the south to devote myself to the struggle for national reunification, suppressing the desire to return and see my family. But they gave me the job of a cowherd! After two days one of the people from north Korea announced that he was leaving. He had come down south, as chief of the interior security organ of Jinyang County. I protested to him: "Since the chairman of the county Party committee told us to look after the cows, this is a Party task. Are you going to turn your back on your duty?"

"I cannot understand what the committee is up to, moving to the village and leaving me, the chief of the county interior security organ, behind in the mountains. Though the roads may be cordoned off by the enemy, by following mountain paths I can find a way out of here, but I need food for the journey."

Hearing this, the other man from north Korea offered to go with him. He was the comrade who had been dispatched as the deputy head of the propaganda department of the county Party committee. I had no alternative but to supply them with flour and dough. In this situation my resolution began to waver, but I felt sorry for the locals who had to look after the cattle, so I made up my mind to stay there with them. Soon Jong Yong Sop, the head of the propaganda department of the Jinyang County Party Committee, came to us from the village. He was a sincere man who had been released from prison when Seoul was liberated.

He said, "I'm sorry for having detained you here so long, but the chairman has now given instructions that you go back to the village."

Thus my career as a cowherd ended, as I drove the cows down to the village. This time, however, the villagers seemed suspicious of us, unlike their kind attitude to the KPA soldiers at the time when they were advancing southward. However, I realized that it was natural for them to be uneasy, because they could not know what atrocities the US and south Korean troops would commit against them if they occupied the village again. I was encouraged at the thought that if we fight successful battles so as to inspire them with confidence of victory they would welcome us.

The next day I was told that the Jinyang County Party Committee was leaving for Ul-ri, Tansong Sub-County, Sanchong County, so I followed it.

After a few days the chairman of the Party committee sent for me. There was a stranger in his office.

"I've come from the provincial Party committee," the stranger said, "I've been looking for you all over, and I finally tracked you down yesterday."

Still indignant about not being accepted as a guerrilla, I complained, "What do you want me for? I've already been rejected as a guerrilla."

"That was a mistake. Please understand," he said contritely.

At any rate I was very glad, so I went with him.

Crossing Talttugi Hill, an outer ridge of Mount Jiri, and traversing the Samjang Valley, we entered the valley leading to the Taewon Temple. Crossing Sae Hill, we lodged at Pangok village. The next day we arrived at Sedong village via the Umchon Valley. There we found the provincial Party workers.

Nam Kyong U, chairman of the provincial Party committee, seemed pleased to see me, and apologized for the way I had been treated. At that, vice-chairman Ho Tong Uk said, "Never mind the bourgeois formalities. Let's get down to work!" And he stressed, "We know the US imperialists are waging this aggressive war in Korea, clamouring about anticommunism. Although they know that Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese imperialists tried to disguise their invasions as anticommunist crusades but perished, they are trying to turn back the wheel of history. What is the difference between the US imperialists and the defeated fascist aggressors? We must go all out in the struggle against the US imperialist aggressors. Let us think about what to do in the future, frankly reflecting on the errors committed in the course of arranging our ranks during the retreat."

In this way I became a member of the guerrilla unit on Mount Jiri. Even today I cannot forget the excitement I felt at that time.

Newspaper of South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee

As I returned to the provincial Party committee guerrilla units were being organized under the command of the Hadong, Sanchong and Jinyang County Party Committees, which were to be combined into the Kyongnam (South Kyongsang Province) combined unit. The appointment of an able military cadre, Ri Yong Hui, as its commander was being discussed at that time. Ri had been a member of the 14th Regiment in Ryosu, which played the leading part in the Ryosu-Sunchon incident.

Meanwhile, the Fifth Division of the south Korean army stationed in Namwon was ordered to "mop up" the guerrillas on Mount Jiri. But the whole area of the mountain remained completely liberated until February-March 1951. All the organs including the provincial Party committee and county Party committees were located in the villages, and the guerrilla units prevented the south Korean troops from advancing into the liberated area. For this reason there were more noncombatants than combat-

ants on Mount Jiri. I did not actually fight as a guerrilla, but was put in charge of publishing a newspaper for the propaganda department of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee. But since I had come to the front as a war correspondent I could not complain about my new job. Thus I, yesterday's war correspondent of the KPA, became a war correspondent of the guerrilla army. For the purpose of preparing for publication of the newspaper, I went to the wireless squad deep in the mountains and stayed there for three days. As soon as I returned to the village Ho Tong Uk instructed me to go to North Jolla Province without delay to establish contacts between the North Jolla Provincial Party Committee and South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee.

Our party was composed of three people – a man who was familiar with the local terrain because he had lived in the area before the war, the chief of the communications section of the organizational department and myself. It took us six days to reach Mt. Huimun, which was a centre of liberation activity in North Jolla Province. There we contacted Pang Jun Phyo, the chairman of the North Jolla Provincial Party Committee. We stayed there three days, but an attack by south Korean troops forced us to return to South Kyongsang Province. With no rest, we were ordered to leave for Mount Togyu. After lodging one night in Mt. Ttokkal together with the wireless squad we went to Nongkol village across the Sukmang Pass in Hamyang County. Ho Tong Uk had reached there before us. I was to publish a newspaper as soon as possible, he told.

Three days later Nam Kyong U arrived, and the organizing committee of the provincial Party committee was formed. It was composed of leading cadres of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee. The organizing committee was the supreme organ of the provincial Party committee. After that, under the guidance of the organizing committee, the newspaper began to come out. It was a mimeographed weekly. Despite numerous difficulties we managed to obtain over 2,000 Japanese stencils of high quality and a considerable amount of paper. We carried Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) dispatches which we received by radio, daily battle situations and reports from city and county Party committees. The editorials and articles were written by the heads of the respective sections, in accordance with the plan of the editorial board.

There were not many copies, but all the guerrillas were eager to read the paper. In special demand was the issue which carried the radio speech of General Kim Il Sung on October 11, 1950. The first question when guerrillas met was "Have you read the newspaper?" And to this, tapping himself on the chest, the other would say, "Yes." It implied that he was carrying a copy in his inside pocket. When the newspaper carried

the news about the great battles north of the Chongchon River and near Lake Jangjin, marking the start of the new advance of the KPA, it caused a great sensation among the guerrillas. The liberation of Pyongyang... the liberation of Hamhung... the second liberation of Seoul... as the boom of gun shots echoed in the north, the guerrillas said that it was heard like the gun shots of the People's Army.

The newspaper was no more than an octavo in size, but it was not only a propaganda sheet conveying the Party's voice and the report of the Supreme Command of the KPA to the guerrillas, but also a source of inspiration, urging the guerrillas on to great feats.

When I close my eyes there appear in my mind's eye newspapers mimeographed with Indian ink, sometimes purple or even red, the newspapers guerrillas delivered across the deep ravines of Mount Jiri.

In those days, deriving poetic inspiration from seeing torchlight on Anjangbawi ridge of Mount Jiri, on Mount Waryong on the south coast and on Mount Ttokkal in Obu Sub-County, I composed a poem and carried it in the newspaper. It still remains in my memory:

The sun has sunk below yon lofty peak.
The icy wind blowing the fallen leaves
Whips the face of a stealthy revolutionary
Avoiding the enemy's eyes.

Pitch darkness shrouds his eyes
He is walking towards a twinkling light
Streaming from a remote cabin,
Stumbling along the murky path.

The barking of a dog in a distant village
Has it been alerted by the enemy?
He stops to check the movements of the enemy
In the scattered pillboxes, and moves on again.

"Liberty and anticommunism" mask invasion
The enemy wield swords and fire guns
The flames of patriotic struggle
Will destroy the blood-stained murderers.

When we embarked on the road of revolution
To unfurl the flag of a new history over our ravaged land,
Our wives wished us a triumphal return.

When may we see their smiling faces again?

Flames blazing on every peak,
Fire thrusting into the enemy's breast
Torches over there, flames ablaze,
Hoist higher the ever-victorious banner of reunification.

A Heroic Death

Receiving the news that Comrade Ri Chong Song, commander of the Namhae (South Coast) Brigade, was trapped in Kuchon-dong near Mt. Togyu, the organizing committee of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee decided to conduct a joint struggle with his unit. This move led to the Anui battle.

Anui was the seat of a sub-county in Hamyang County. For this operation Ri Chong Song's unit was assigned the task of laying an ambush on the road leading to Kochang while the Kyongnam unit attacked Anui. For this purpose a heavy firearms platoon was deployed on a hill near Anui and the general command of this battle was committed to a competent officer, whose name I forgot, but who was a veteran of the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle.

But just as victory was within our grasp Ri Chong Song unit, which had controlled over the road, suddenly began to withdraw from their positions. It seems that they had been given a wrong order. The enemy counterattacked not facing any resistance. In the critical situation in which our soldiers could be annihilated, the commander ordered a retreat, and he himself climbed up to the height where the heavy firearms were deployed and began a covering fire. Nevertheless, the enemy's mortars destroyed our heavy firearms on the height with suspiciously accurate fire. The commander was killed by a mortar shell as he covered the retreat of his men. As he was dying he asked that a report of his death be conveyed to the Supreme Command in Pyongyang. Owing to his sacrifice the attacking unit was able to retreat safely, although the battle was lost.

Of course, though the loss of the platoon which was defending the height was a tremendous blow it was a more serious problem that the location of the heavy firearms, which had been kept top secret, had been leaked. It was obvious that there was a spy among us.

Because of the close pursuit by the south Korean police it was decided to put off the search for the spy, give the Namhae Brigade headquarters the responsibility for inquiring into the blame for the advanced with-

drawal and punishing the military personnel concerned, and shift the operational base to Mount Jiri again.

Over 50 noncombatants led by Kang Myong Sok, chief of the organizational department of the provincial Party committee, left the area. On Mt. Ttokkal in Obu Sub-County, Sanchong County, the police made a surprise attack on us from all directions.

The chief of the liaison agency at the Ttokkal Pass was a young man named Hong Phal Sip. It was said that he was named Phal Sip (meaning 80) because he was born when his father reached the age of 80. At this critical juncture, in order to break through the enemy's tightening siege he led a charge, shouting, "Storming party members, forward after me!"

Their heroic action saved the noncombatants. Tragically Hong Phal Sip himself and storming party members fell in action....

Try to picture in your mind the heroic deaths of people who gave their lives in battle, shouting, "Long live the Democratic People's Republic of Korea!" Imagine the bitter grief of the day when Hong Phal Sip, an only son, dedicated his youth for the reunification of his country on Mount Jiri, with love exceeding that for his aged parents!

Our hearts seemed rent with grief. That day is still fresh in my memory as if it were only yesterday. The image of Hong Phal Sip, who made a martyr of himself to rescue over 50 noncombatants, is engraved deep in my heart. The patriotism of the numerous Hong Phal Sips who fought on Mount Jiri is that of the white-clothed people (meaning the Korean nation) thirsting for sovereign independence and reunification. But who keeps our homeland divided into two parts and is fostering foreign forces and flunkeyists and traitors to the nation in half the territory of the country today?

Crossing mountains and ravines we reached the Umchon stream.

We crossed the stream and dropped in at Pangok village. Toward the end of that year police commanded by Kim Jong Won massacred all the villagers, including children and old people. We lodged there that night. The following day we crossed Sae Hill and walked along the valley leading to Taewon Temple. When we reached Phyongchon village we learned that there had been a police raid the previous day and another raid was expected. The village's air was heavy. So we, in company with the wireless squad, went up along the Korumi Valley via Sichon. We stayed in Tongdang village that night. The next day, when we called at Jungsan village we found that all the houses had been burned down, and the villagers were living in the ruins. We bought persimmons there and were cooking gruel with rice and salt which Jo Pok Ae, chairwoman of the provincial women's union, had put aside as emergency rations, when

Comrade Sim Sang Thae, chairman of the Hadong County Party Committee, arrived. After a long discussion, we reached the conclusion that it would be better to go to Samjang Sub-County, Sanchong County, than to Hadong. We crossed Janggo Peak and finally reached Jangdae Valley in Samjang Sub-County.

Despite frequent fierce battles, we managed to put out a third issue of the newspaper.

For What Are We Fighting?

In Jangdae Valley we met a unit which had been formed out of part of the Sixth Division of the People's Army after it had retreated north. It was called the 105th Unit, because it was formed on October 5. The 105th Unit was a powerful one: Its soldiers had rich experience in battle and were equipped with arms of the level of a regular army. Its commander was captain Jong Yong Se, who had served as an orderly under Kim Tu Bong in Yanan, China, during Japanese imperialist rule, and its political commissar was a man who had once been a prosecutor of a county in the south coast area.

The 105th Unit held the Anjangbawi ridge.

Around that time the retreat routes had been cut off, and now that the road leading to the Thaebaek Mountains from the Chuphung Pass was blocked the KPA soldiers were forced to advance fighting constant battles. That was how idle soldiers came into being. They returned to Mount Jiri to avoid engagements with the enemy by joining the guerrillas, and then idled their time away. So, an ideological campaign was staged to root out such slackers.

Meanwhile, some of them actually surrendered to the police. Such defectors scattered leaflets from airplanes, spreading lies about the guerrillas and urging them to surrender.

"Just when we are short of toilet paper they have come to supply it to us," mocked one soldier.

One of their schemes was to attempt to split the 105th Unit from the Party. One of leaflets said:

"Nam Kyong U, chairman of the provincial Party committee, is leading a dissipated life, living like a lord, keeping a girl called Pak Mun Gyu near him as his secretary. He uses the 105th Unit as his bodyguard."

This sowed dissension among the high-ranking officers of the unit, who suggested retreating north and abandoning the provincial Party committee. Their allegation was that since they were the people's army they

could not remain under the guidance of the provincial Party committee, defending its quarters alone.

At that time the provincial Party committee was planning another operation, to mend the damage done by the failure of Ri Chong Song's unit. This plan necessitated using the 105th Unit. In this situation we could not help considering the proposal to retreat north to be an intention to shirk another battle.

According to an investigation made by the organizing committee of the provincial Party committee, it was true that Nam Kyong U had deployed the 105th Unit on the Anjangbawi ridge for the purpose of defending Jangdae Valley, the base of the provincial Party Committee. But the unit had no right to abandon the Party committee. It seemed that those officers were using Nam Kyong U as an excuse to save their own skins. If they had been genuine Party members it would have been proper for them to level a principled criticism at him so as to correct his mistakes.

Though well aware that a guerrilla unit divorced from the Party's leadership is like a ship without a compass, the officers of the 105th Unit finally abandoned the Party committee and marched north in retreat. This was a blatant act of betrayal of their men.

In order not to give the enemy another excuse to slander us, the provincial Party committee convened a meeting at once. It decided that a company of 17 men to guard the provincial Party committee should be organized and that the guerrilla unit must not be posted around its base. In addition, the meeting demoted Pak Mun Gyu, the chairman's secretary, to an instructor of the Sanchong County women's union.

I still consider it a matter of pride that in all circusmstances we made no concessions on matters related to the Party's authority and honour.

After splitting from the Party, the 105th Unit was not able to fight battles even if it wanted to, because it was completely ignorant of the enemy's situation. Eventually the men of the unit came to get wind of the erroneous acts of their senior officiers and protested furiously, and the whole unit turned back at the Chuphung Pass.

When it arrived back, the provincial Party committee expressed high appreciation for the soldiers' patriotism, and re-examined the class standpoint of its commander, Jong Yong Se, and political commissar. After having blamed them for abandoning the Party, the provincial Party committee removed them from their posts. At the same time it decided to intensify ideological work.

Nevertheless, in the course of the campaign the two demoted officers, far from repenting of their errors, actually became turncoats.One midnight they fired a volley of shots at the quarters of Pae Myong Hun, the chair-

man of the South Kyongsang Provincial People's Committee, and fled down the mountain to surrender at the Samjang police substation. The chairman's orderly was killed and Pae himself was wounded. Pae had originally been a worker in North Hamgyong Province during Japanese imperialist rule and after liberation studied abroad at the Party's recommendation. With the outbreak of the war he was recalled home and dispatched to south Korea.

I pondered over their treacherous act. For what had they been struggling until then? Had they marched to the battlefield hankering after their own comfort and distinction? From the beginning they had neither patriotic minds nor faith in the Party's cause. In the heyday of our power they would have shouted louder than any one else: "Let's fight for our fatherland at the risk of our lives!" but as soon as the US troops landed in Inchon and the temporary strategic retreat of the KPA began, they wavered. Such being the case, they were dismissed from their posts and criticized, so they turned traitor in no time. Still worse, to ingratiate themselves with the enemy, they committed the crime of firing at the quarters of the chairman of the provincial people's committee. The unit commander and the political commissar had neither a basic sense of duty nor an ounce of conscience. No sooner had they betrayed their former comrades than they willingly engaged in operations to wipe them out.

The word *tallanggochol* occurs to me. It was a praying mantis that wanted to stop the wheel of history turning. In the long run such people were reduced to no more than praying mantises.

When I was in south Korea I heard that the former political commissar of the 105th Unit later served as a police officer in an area adjacent to Mount Jiri. It is really a tragic-comedy that he betrayed his comrades and abandoned his revolutionary principles only to become a lowly police officer! By the way, could there be any justice or truthfulness in a society where such fellows are swaggering about?

After this event the provincial Party committee called a meeting of military cadres in order to re-arrange the unit. It had to re-examine whether or not the leading personnel of the Party had idled away their time in the base that the soldiers, ready to lay down their lives for the country, had defended. The meeting decided as follows:

First, officials should lead wholesome lives, devoid of any shortcomings, and set an example in their work in order to make sure that no slander by the enemy could alienate the masses from the guerrillas.

Second, the cadres should examine themselves and decide if they were ready to follow the pure sacrificing spirit of the junior officers and

men. At the same time ideological work was to be conducted to intensify study among all ranks and infuse them with hostility for the enemy, and thus bring about a more solid unity in the guerrilla army.

The organizing committee also decided to reprimand Chairman Nam Kyong U for causing confusion in the unit by posting the 105th Unit on the Anjangbawi ridge, regardless of his intention, and report to the Centre.

Afterwards the soldiers of the 105th Unit fought well. Generally, it is said that an army, similar to a machine, blindly obeys the orders of its commander, but the soldiers of the People's Army were different. Though the unit commander and its political commissar were renegades, they could not take their men with them in their betrayal. That was because the rank and file were well aware that they were fighting to defend the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, their unified motherland, and held General Kim Il Sung in the highest esteem.

This is the whole story about the 105th Unit incident. I wrote about this shameful episode when I lived in the south. Some defeats were due to the treachery of renegades, but our soldiers were the heroes, who gave every last ounce of strength and determination in every battle.

Fighting While Studying the Alphabet: Song Jung Myong on Mount Jiri

Of the guerrilla actions led by the provincial Party committee after that, I must mention, first of all, the operation to seize Sichon market, which took place in the early spring of 1951.

The marketplace of Sichon Sub-County, Sanchong County, was at the entrance to Korumi Valley, leading to the Sesok tableland. Being near Mount Jiri, it was an important strategic point both for us and the enemy. For this reason the enemy built a solid pillbox there to guard against the guerrillas' raids. We decided to dispatch the crack "Whistle Unit" to knock out this pillbox. They earned the name because the commander of the unit gave orders to his men by blowing a whistle. It is quite regrettable for me to fail to inquire about his name then.

The most dangerous phase of the operation would be neutralizing the pillbox without suffering large numbers of casualties. Two of those who volunteered to knock out the pillbox were a boy named Kil Thaek and a girl named Choe Jong Ok, who had volunteered to join one of our political operative corps at the outbreak of the war while attending the Russian

language faculty of the Wonsan Teacher's Training College. The commander tried to dissuade these young people from attempting such a dangerous task, but they were adamant, and later covered themselves with glory.

Kil Thaek' father, mother, cousins and other kin had been killed by the enemy. He narrowly escaped death himself as he rushed from his blazing house. He went to live with his uncle. He heard the news of the outbreak of the war and came to the mountains with a cousin when the People's Army began to withdraw from the front. However, the cousin could not stand the hardships, and abandoned the mountains, leaving Kil Thaek behind.

That night the battle began when our trench-mortar unit opened fire. The members of the squad which had volunteered to knock out the pillbox crawled towards it through a shower of bullets; they could not tend to the comrades who fell in action. All of a sudden, Kil Thaek collapsed with an agonized cry. Jong Ok embraced him. Seeing blood gushing out of his side, she tore off a piece of clothing and bandaged the wound. "Stay here. I'll go and destroy the pillbox," she said and kept crawling towards it. At almost point-blank range she tossed a hand grenade inside it.

A loud bang followed, and firing from the pillbox ceased at once. As the police substation was captured Jong Ok went back to where Kil Thaek was lying. The boy could not even open his mouth because it was full of blood. Having seen him carried off for medical treatment, she proceeded to the marketplace in Sichon.

The policemen of the substation had fled and the guns had stopped firing, but the marketplace still reeked of gunpowder. Here and there our armed propaganda teams gathered the people and harangued them:

"We are guerrillas fighting to crush the US imperialist aggressors and their stooges, the Syngman Rhee clique. We are fighting for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a people's society like the one in north Korea, where all the people are well off."

As I calmed down after the battle and agitational work I suddenly missed the sound of the whistle. I found out that the "whistle commander" had been killed in action.

Meanwhile, I received news from the medical unit that Kil Thaek's wound was not serious, and that he was expected to recover in some two months. We soon withdrew from Sichon Sub-County because we were in no position to stay there long. This was a typical guerrilla action.

Guerrilla units, however, did not fight every day. Studies were orga-

nized when we were in safe locations. In fact, the whole unit changed into a school. Classes were formed. What subjects would be taught and who would be the teachers were announced, and textbooks and notebooks were distributed to the guerrillas. The classes were divided into higher and lower ones and a literacy class. The guerrillas in the higher and lower classes were taught Marxist political economics, philosophy, the history of the anti-Japanese struggle, and so forth, and newspaper-reading sessions were held.

Their enthusiasm for study was very high, and they kept their pencils and notebooks inside their caps. I can never forget the serious looks on their faces when they carefully took out and dried their sweat-drenched notebooks on their return from battle.

These were certainly not "people who had taken to the mountains in despair", nor were they "victims of history". That is a most abominable insult to the guerrillas. They were fully conscious of their mission and duties, and were always keen to study to fully understand them.

Around that time we had the problem of infiltration by spies. I should like to recount one such incident:

This happened after the battle at Sichon. The provincial Party committee made its base in Jogae Valley within Mount Jiri. One day a man and a boy were arrested by a sentry and interrogated. The man said that he was from north Korea and had studied physiognomy. His purpose in coming to us, he said, was to read the guerrillas' faces and tell their fortunes.

However, we were tipped off by underground sympathizers in the village where the district head lived that he was a spy dispatched by the intelligence department of the south Korean navy. He intended to dispatch the boy to the district head with any information he could gather, and the boy could then guide the enemy to the guerrilla base. Seeing that the game was up, the bogus physiognomist slipped away at night, but could not get away completely and was captured by my friend Song Jung Myong from Phungsan, from whom I had parted in Hungnam at the beginning of the war.

Our meeting, which had been promised for the day of victory, the day of reunification of the country, was realized like this, but we were convinced that the day when we would win the war and return to our hometown would surely come before we parted again. I still remember that he asked for news about Phungsan at that time. He seemed very worried about what might have happened to my wife in the chaos of retreat. Even in the short intervals between guerrilla actions he was concerned about other people. To tell the truth, all my friends were like that....

The physiognomist was interrogated and his true colours disclosed. The boy, whose parents had been killed by the enemy, was indignant at being used as a cat's-paw. That rascal had coaxed the boy to follow him, saying that he would lead him to join the guerrilla unit. The physiognomist was executed and the boy enlisted in the guerrilla unit.

Girl Soldiers of Mount Jiri

The provincial Party committee mapped out another operation in this complex situation. As I remember, the next battle, the battle at Machon, also took place in 1951. Machon, a sub-county seat in Hamyang County, lay between North Jolla Province and South Kyongsang Province, and at the same time between Namwon County and Hamyang County. From the top of the mountain one can see Sannae Sub-County of Namwon County, and on the other side, Machon Sub-County of Hamyang County. The two sub-counties are closely contiguous to each other, but quite contrast in people's taste and character; if one takes a meal in Machon he feels something heavy in his mouth and if in Sannae, light. Just as food tastes are quite different like this, the inhabitants of Kyongsang Province apparently seemed to be blunt, but their bluntness had truthfulness: the people of Jolla Province seemed minute, but their minuteness contains genuineness, I remember. Naturally, it can be said that the people who sweat away at their job have truthfulness and purity in his mind.

Here I would like to give a brief account about the terrain of Machon. The Umchon stream flows along the southern border of Machon Sub-County, and down stream there is Munjong village. Across from there lies Sedong village, from which a road leads to Namwon and Hamyang. Near Machon there is a valley leading to Paemsa Valley, which is a famous tourism spot in south Korea today, and another long valley up to the Ssukbat Pass, a point leading to Samjang Sub-County of Sanchong County.

Since Machon is of strategic importance, being located at the entrance to the valleys giving access to the centre of Mount Jiri, the Machon police substation was heavily fortified. Accordingly, in order to retake Machon it was essential to destroy the pillboxes which defended it. For this purpose we were ready to shed much blood.

Jong Ok and Kil Thaek were among those who volunteered to try to knock out the pillboxes. A slender girl of 21, of medium stature, Jong Ok had sparkling dark eyes in a tanned face. I can never forget her. Even

men admired her courage. When I once asked her if she was not afraid, she said smiling:

"Yes, but, as soon as a battle begins I think of how the enemy is desperate to kill me and my comrades, and make our people slaves again. Then hatred surges in my heart and I crawl towards the enemy pillboxes, determined to destroy them. Besides, I'm a member of the political workers' corps, dispatched south with a task to perform, am not I?"

She kept her dispatch certificate printed with the emblem of the DPRK carefully in her inside pocket. That dispatch card fascinated Kil Thaek. After he had seen it he followed her, almost worshipping her, calling her "Sister sent by General Kim Il Sung."

Kil Thaek's ambition was to attend a teacher's training college and become a teacher like Jong Ok as soon as the US imperialists and Syngman Rhee clique had been driven out of south Korea and the whole country had been liberated by the DPRK. Even in the hard conditions of mountain life Jong Ok was a tender-hearted sister and kind teacher to Kil Thaek.

According to the plan, one group of guerrillas was lying in ambush by the road along which the police were to pass, while another group, whose task was to destroy the pillboxes, was waiting for the battle to begin. Presently the combat signal was given. Despite the deadly machine-gun fire from the pillboxes our forces climbed the hill and destroyed them one by one.

What was the source of their courage, the courage they demonstrated crawling audaciously towards the pillboxes despite showers of bullets while hearing the moans of their fallen comrades-in-arms? I dare to say that it was their determination to die for their country and people.

As the last machine-gun fell silent the attackers rushed towards the police substation. In the battle an enemy bullet broke Jong Ok's leg. Though she received treatment at the medical unit she became semi-crippled and was forced to hobble from then on.

A broken leg was a devastating blow to a guerrilla, as there was a saying that to guerrilla feet are wings. However, she never gave up fighting even when some of her comrades-in-arms advised her to go to and live with their relatives.

"I'll meet the People's Army while fighting the enemy in the mountains even if I die. If you want really to send me out of the mountains, give me a hand grenade and I'll blow myself up," she snapped. So that was the end of that.

Jong Ok was sent to help the wireless squad and do newspaper work. Later I noticed that she seemed depressed. When I asked her in a sym-

pathetic voice why she was so gloomy, she replied that she had a lover, but perhaps he would not want to marry her now that she had a deformed leg. He had been her classmate at the college. When the war broke out he enlisted in the People's Army. I was disappointed to hear such a discouraging remark from brave Jong Ok, but, at the same time, my affection for her grew deeper. I consoled her, saying that he would love her more fervently, and that if he rejected her because of her deformed leg he would be a man unworthy of her love. At this, her face brightened. She said, "You are right. I also think so."

Since her arrival at us Kil Thaek frequented her quarters. That was why I was familiar with Kil Thaek.

Among those who died in the Machon battle was a girl named Sin Sun Wol. Before the war she had worked on the Riwon County (South Hamgyong Province) Committee of the Women's Union, and then on the Hamhung City Women's Union Committee. After the war broke out she was dispatched to the south as a member of the political operative corps. While working in Jinju she went into the mountains as the retreat started. There she worked as the head of the culture and education section of the provincial women's union committee. She was hit by a bullet while crawling up towards an enemy pillbox, together with other guerrillas during the Machon battle. In the heat of battle her comrades-in-arms left her and pressed on towards the pillboxes. When they ran back to her after destroying them she said in a trembling voice but with bright eyes:

"I am too badly wounded to continue fighting; I will just be a burden to you, I'm afraid. I'll blow myself up. Please convey my story of my end to my hometown on the day of victory." She then blew herself up with a hand grenade.

I do not know if her parents and siblings were still living in her native place or if she had a lover there.

I was not able to inform anybody of her heroic death until now, 43 years later. It bothers me more. What can I say more to her parents and sisters and brothers who had been waiting for 43 years? Only the fact that the dispatch certificate identifying her to be a member of the political operative corps, printed with the emblem of the DPRK, was kept in her chest.

Burying her shattered body, I recalled my wife whom I had left behind in the north. It was towards the end of 1950 that I last heard about her from her uncle who had come to the south. He said that she had retreated northward and was teaching there. To tell the truth, I always felt guilty about bringing such agony on my wife. However, the iron will in the souls

of Jong Ok and Sin Sun Wol convinced me that my wife also would be braving all the dangers and difficulties that our people were suffering with a stout heart.

Understand Us Correctly

Reminiscing about the guerrilla actions on Mount Jiri, the most difficult thing is to recollect dates. There remain in my memory only the changes of nature: the rising and sinking of the sun between mountain peaks, wild flowers in full bloom, white snow falling silently, covering everything on the earth... Sometimes I can hardly remember the years when events occurred.

The battle of Chuphung Pass probably took place in the autumn of 1951.

The organizing committee of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee planned a long-distance operation by which the guerrillas were to move from Mount Jiri to the Chuphung Pass via Mts. Kaya and Togyu and blow up a railway tunnel with a view to preventing the enemy from transporting war materials to the front.

At that time there were 2,000 guerrillas under the control of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee. Their field of activity comprised Mount Kaya, south of Mount Jiri, and Mount Togyu, to the west. This was the largest territory under the command of a provincial Party committee.

On the way to its destination the unit occupied three police substations around Mount Kaya simultaneously. The Paekkol Unit of the south Korean army was mobilized against the guerrillas, and the battles between them lasted tree days and tree nights.

It was during this operation, I was told, that an enemy soldier shot himself rather than be taken prisoner. As a war correspondent, I was used to inquiring about the situation at the front, but this was the first time I had heard of such an incident. I interviewed the guerrilla involved, and he told me that he had chased two south Korean soldiers. One had surrendered but the other had shot himself. The guerrilla said, "When I asked him why his colleague had done it, he replied that his unit commanders had told their troops that if they were captured alive they would be tortured to death."

In actual fact, the guerrillas always tried to capture the enemy alive—except in "kill or be killed" situations. We were hoping to re-educate our opponents and make them understand that the fratricidal war was being waged for the benefit of the US imperialists and their stooges. The

enemy, however, indulged in random killing, not only of soldiers and guerrillas but also of civilians.

Walker, commander of the US 8th Army, who was killed by the People's Army, once raved, "Even if those before you are old men, women or children your hands must not tremble."

When Ridgway, later commander of the US 8th Army and of the UN forces, worked out an offensive in February 1952 with an eye to retrieving the defeats suffered in previous battles, he called it a "killing" operation, explaining, "I do not think people should forget that war means killing."

By the way, let me mention the POW problem.

We disarmed prisoners of war and gave them ideological education. When they sympathized with our noble aim and wanted to share life and death with us, we enlisted them in the guerrilla unit after a few days' training. In most cases we advise them not to be hostile towards the guerrillas in future before releasing them. If the guerrillas had killed their prisoners, then the policemen and soldiers of the south Korean army would have fought to the end in order not to be captured. It was precisely for this reason that the enemy spread the rumour that the guerrillas killed their prisoners barbarously. The soldier who shot himself to death was a victim of that propaganda.

A glimpse of how the enemy treated prisoners was revealed in the newspaper *Hangyorye Sinmun* dated December 19, 1992 published in south Korea.

The article introduced some documents unearthed at the site of the POW camp on Koje Island concerning the crimes of the US imperialists, who used prisoners of war of the People's Army as guinea pigs for germ, chemical and atomic warfare tests.

According to the article, the prisoners wrote on their undershirts in their own blood about such atrocities, which were similar to the crimes committed in the Meidanek and Oswiecim concentration camps of Nazi and the experiments on living bodies of prisoners of war perpetrated by the notorious 731st Unit of the Japanese army in China. Also they earnestly appeal to their government to save them from the jaw of death.

I remember that when I was taken prisoner I demanded that I be sent to Koje Island, where the other prisoners of war of the People's Army were interned. If I had been sent there I would probably have been used as material for a germ warfare experiment, or otherwise exterminated.

It was natural that the soldiers of the south Korean army, who had killed the innocent people of Kochang and Hamphyong en masse, could not expect any mercy from the guerrillas. I will tell you about those horrible incidents later.

Killers would have their own "yardstick". According to it the communist army men would receive a due price for the enemy's cruel slaughtering. However, the guerrillas never killed war prisoners. It may not be understandable for the enemy soldiers. It is not until they take off the colour glasses of "anticommunism" that they understand it.

But let us go back to Mount Jiri.

When the guerrillas captured Haein Temple on Mount Kaya after a three-day battle the monks and local people were afraid of them. Even the abbot of the temple took refuge. Because it might be, I thought, possible after hard-fought battle, or because as the soldier of the Paekkol Unit thought so they recognized guerrillas as a gang who would kill the people for no reason.

Such being the situation, our propaganda team went down to the village and told the people that we were fighting against the US imperialists and their stooges for a unified country where all the people could live happily. The villagers were reassured, and even the abbot of the temple came out of hiding.

He asked to see the commander of the unit, and was ushered in to meet the officials of the provincial Party committee. He produced a gold wine cup and said, "This is one of the treasures of Haein Temple, used when I make offerings to Buddha. I'd like to present it to the commander of the guerrilla unit."

Did he mistake the guerrillas for a gang of bandits or did he want to express his appreciation to them for struggling for the country's reunification and driving out the aggressors? I wondered.

"This is a national treasure," said one of the guerrillas. "We are fighting to defend the country and the people's property. You should look after it, not give it away."

The abbot seemed impressed by this argument, and went on to say that temples deep in the mountains had often been used as centres of the activities of the Righteous Volunteers, adding that his father, who had also been a monk, had actively helped the volunteers in their struggle and been killed by the Japanese. Later I was told that a priest of Yongok Temple on Mount Jiri was killed by the Japanese while giving active assistance to the volunteers led by Ko Kwang Sun. I wonder if he was the abbot's father.

We realized that, although he wore clerical garb, his desire for a reunified and independent country was the same as ours. Since then I have not seen him, but I think he was a patriotic-minded monk. Even a monk who was cultivating himself in the mountains and had renounced the world earnestly desired a reunified country, but the so-called politi-

cians of south Korea are doing their best to keep the country divided. This is really lamentable.

The attitude of the villagers towards the guerrillas changed considerably. Probably it was because they learned that we had declined to accept the gold wine cup.

In accordance with the plan, the guerrilla unit left for the Chuphung Pass, and the provincial Party committee and noncombatants returned to Mount Jiri. At that time a critical situation arose: Jong Yong Se, the former commander of the 105th Unit, led force of police to attack us. It seemed that he knew well where we could be found and that the guerrillas were operating far away from us. The offensive was a particularly powerful one.

Since those who remained at the provincial Party committee base were all noncombatants, except for a few guards, they could not counterattack, and so we were under seige for ten days. Short of food, at nights we would go out to gather green persimmons which we toasted over a fire. The local people had been driven out by the south Korean army. They had cultivated persimmon trees near their houses, and it was these trees that kept us alive, although the fruit was not yet ripe.

As a result we suffered from constipation after eating the green persimmons. But no one deserted from the guerrilla base, as we were all determined not to accept the fate of colonial slaves again even though our bodies might be buried in the soil of Mount Jiri, considering the Democratic People's Republic of Korea alone to be our genuine motherland.

Finally, the police lifted their siege and departed.

The Battles of Chuphung Pass and Agyang; Death of Jong Ok

At Chuphung Pass Commander Ku Ho Thaek, who had been a guerrilla even before the war, blew up the tunnel there just as a US military train entered it. It took the enemy more than 15 days to clear the tunnel, so the transportation of military supplies was stopped for that period.

The provincial Party committee then drew up a plan to raid the Agyang Police Substation in Hadong County. This action was a counterattack to the offensive by the enemy against the noncombatants and at the same time was aimed at preparing for the coming winter. Agyang was the richest sub-county in Hadong County since it had fertile plains.

At that time the Kyongnam unit has four regiments under its control: the First Regiment, the guerrilla unit led by the Hadong County Party Committee; the Third Regiment, led by the Sanchong County Party Committee; the Fifth Regiment, led by the Jinyang County Party Committee; and the Seventh Regiment, a guerrilla unit on Mt. Togyu which had been newly formed with guerrillas from different units. Every regiment consisted of three companies. At the beginning the units were called battalions, but they were renamed regiments in mid-1951. Around November 1951 the strength of the guerrilla units was about 2,000, I remember. By the standards of a regular army they were not large enough to be called regiments, but they were strong military forces as guerrilla units.

According to the plan of operations for attacking the Agyang Police Substation, the Jonnam (South Jolla Province) unit was to intercept reinforcements coming to aid the south Korean army from Kurye, the Third Regiment was to do the same at Hadong, and the First Regiment was to attack the police substation.

The police substation near Mount Jiri was surrounded by two bamboo fences, inside which was a heavy machine-gun pillbox.

In accordance with the plan, the First Regiment besieged the police substation and cut off its communications with the outside. Then the Second Company of the First Regiment attacked the back gate of the substation, driving back the policemen who tried to escape that way. The enemy, driven into a tight corner, resisted desperately to the last. The assault of the First Company on the front gate also faced difficulties.

The mines the guerrillas used in those days were made with powder obtained from 60 kilogram shells they captured from the enemy. But these mines were unreliable. Due to the withering fire from the police substation, the First Company was not able to approach the fences, and so exploded a mine 15 metres in front of it. The explosion started fires on the straw roofs of the nearby houses, illuminating the area so that the guerrillas' movements were exposed and they could not approach the police substation. In addition, they had to run around putting the fires out, as they could not stand by and watch the people's property burning.

While they were doing so enemy reinforcements arrived, and the guerrillas had to withdraw. So the operation was unsuccessful. However, it could be said that we would have done more harm to our cause if we had allowed the people's property to be destroyed while we pressed ahead with the attack.

The arrival of enemy reinforcements in the Agyang battle was a prelude to the large-scale offensive launched in late 1951-early 1952.

One day, to our surprise, a 13-year-old boy came to join the guerrillas after killing a policeman in Taepho-ri, Samjang Sub-County.

I went to see the boy in order to write about him.

His village in Taepho-ri was located at the foot of Mount Jiri. The police frequented the village and beat the people, young and old, saying that they had contacts with the guerrillas in the mountains. The families of the guerrillas lived like frightened hares. They had to serve sumptuous dinners for the police, killing pigs and chickens whenever they came. If they had no money they had to borrow it to entertain the unwelcome visitors.

The women of guerrillas' families were violated frequently.

These were sufferings that all the inhabitants of the guerrilla areas had to undergo in those days. That day, too, the villagers had been forced to arrange another party for the police, who stood their rifles up in one corner of the room and soon became befuddled with drink. Remembering how his father had been beaten almost to death by the police for no reason, the boy shook with rage. Disgusted at the sight of the village and neighbourhood unit bosses currying favour with the police, he grabbed one of the rifles and shot a policeman. He then ran off into the mountains carrying the rifle. The provincial Party committee admitted him as a guerrilla and allowed him to keep the rifle.

Meanwhile there occurred a tragic incident in the vicinity of a bamboo grove in Jangdae Valley.

Harried by the police after the Agyang battle, we were short of provisions. Inspite of hunger, the guerrillas made painstaking efforts to carry out their assignments.

One day we had to move swiftly to another place, in face of the enemy's siege, but Jong Ok, who had a high fever, was unable to walk. So we hid her in the bamboo grove and told her:

"Even if the 'punitive' troops approach, you must lie still, giving no sign of life. We'll come for you at night."

Jong Ok, in a coma with high fever, requested to me, clasping my hand: "Kill me before you go and send this dispatch certificate to the Central Committee of the Party."

However, I calmed her saying, "Hide here in silence. You must stay alive and fight the enemy to the last."

Her bitter cry seemed to me as if rending my heart.

At midnight we returned to the bamboo grove, but found it burned to the ground. Jong Ok had been burned to ashes, only a few bones being visible. Burying her remains, I regretted that I had not asked her lover's name and address. I resolved that when the period of trials and hard-

ships ended I would seek out her lover and tell him about Jong Ok's love for him and her courageousness. I little thought that she, my junior by 15 years, would die before me.

Jong Ok, who lost her mother at a tender age and grew up under her father's care, told me that when she became a student her father was moved to tears, adding, "If he sees me teaching children in the reunified homeland after the war, my father will shed tears again."

I called out before her grave: "Don't forget Mount Jiri! On every ridge sleep the brave daughters of this country, who passed away harbouring pure affection for their fatherland and nation."

My last sight of Jong Ok is vivid in my mind's eye even now.

Ri Hyon Sang's Unit

While sadness over Jong Ok's death was still lingering in our minds we received news that the unit led by Ri Hyon Sang was approaching. For guerrillas, news that a new unit is coming is glad tidings indeed. But I did not meet Ri Hyon Sang's unit with pleasure. Perhaps it was because of my sorrow over the loss of Jong Ok.

The night that Ri Hyon Sang's unit arrived the military officials of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee held a meeting in order to discuss our future action programme. I was then engaged in the job of editing the newspaper, and, I took a seat in one corner of the room.

Under discussion was the problem of whether the guerrilla unit under the control of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee and the Ri Hyon Sang's unit should conduct a joint struggle or not. The debate grew heated, with the veteran guerrillas who had been fighting on Mount Jiri since before the war and Nam Kyong U, chairman of the provincial Party committee, insisting on joint action.

It seemed to me that they were attracted by Ri Hyon Sang's remarkable military achievements. Ri, in fact, had struggled bravely in Seoul before the August 15 liberation. He had been in prison together with other comrades involved in the "Communist Group case". During the first southward march of the Korean People's Army he scored brilliant military achievements: He destroyed a military train and police substations in Kochang, Hamyang, Hapchon and other areas, cut off the enemy's retreat. He also raided a US army wireless telegraphy office in the vicinity of Taegu, the headquarters of US troops in Changyong County, and the US Counterintelligence Corps office and a prison in Jonju City, and so

on. So he was well known as a hero among the guerrillas on Mount Jiri and the local inhabitants.

His unit, along with a unit of the People's Army in the rear of the enemy, marched north and then again south, along the ridges of the Sobaek Mountains, expanding its ranks all the time. Since the unit was fully equipped with US arms and wore US uniforms, its combat capacity was enormous and its morale was also high.

But Ho Tong Uk, vice-chairman of the provincial Party committee, opposed joint operations. The reason were: First, it is a firm principle that the army of a socialist state should be under the guidance of the Party. Therefore, to separate the guerrilla units under the control of the provincial Party committees from the Party and attach them to a purely military unit (Southern Army) commanded by Comrade Ri Hyon Sang would separate them from the Party, and so the proposal was wrong in principle.

Second, a guerrilla unit is a force fighting a regular army by conducting small-unit activities, taking advantage of the terrain. Joint action through absorption of the guerrilla forces under the control of provincial Party committees would transform the operations into a struggle by a large unit, that is, action to occupy positions, as a regular army does. Such a reckless attempt would bring enormous losses to the guerrilla forces.

The other officers of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee and myself supported this opinion. The meeting ended without any conclusion, because Nam Kyong U was adamant.

Perhaps the speeches made at the meeting were reported to Ri Hyon Sang, for some days later the chief of the political department of his unit came to me and demanded to check the copy I was preparing for the newspaper. I could not comply with his demand, and said, "You know this is against regulations, don't you?"

"This is an order from the General Commander."

"Only if it were an instruction from the Party Central Committee could I comply," I said. "But as things stand I cannot show it to any one."

"What! This comrade?"

"The purpose of my entering the mountains is not for arguments. So much for our quarrel."

He told Ri Hyon Sang what I said that day, I think. So the latter got a bad impression of me. I was told that at a meeting of six provincial Party committees – North and South Chungchong Provinces, North and South Kyongsang Provinces and North and South Jolla Provinces – he spoke ill of me. "Why is that Ri who edits the *Newspaper of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee* so insolent?" were his words.

However, he was a fervent fighter and a comrade boundlessly loyal to the revolution, irrespective of my feelings towards him, and vice versa.

He vigorously conducted guerrilla activities, crossing and recrossing the steep ridges of the Jiri and Sobaek Mountains, ambushing the enemy, raiding bases and annihilating the enemy. Thus he made a conspicuous contribution to the victory in the Fatherland Liberation War.

One day in September 1953, over a month after the ceasefire, he was abruptly encountered with the enemy "punitive" force in Pitjim Valley on Mount Jiri and died a heroic death in a fierce battle. He was then 48 years old.

A huge reward had been offered for his capture. The head of Ri Hyon Sang,'communist bandit', was placed on a pole in his native village and a plaque anouncing, "The death place of Ri Hyon Sang, 'communist bandit'" at the spot where he died in battle.

Hearing this sad news, I felt regret about having been on bad terms with him. Although he died in battle, Ri Hyon Sang and his soldiers remain alive in history as our Party's members who devoted themselves to the sacred work of reunification of the country and our revolution.

I was moved to tears to hear about the trust in and favours done for comrade Ri Hyon Sang and his bereaved family on the part of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il.

First of all, what gladdened me greatly was to hear that his four sons and daughters have been brought up to be competent workers following their father's will under the particular care of the great leader Kim Il Sung and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il.

His children studied abroad under the Party's solicitude in the days of the grim war and graduated from the Central Party School or a university and worked or still work at different central organs.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung conferred on Ri the Order of the National Flag Ist Class in 1951, in 1952 the Freedom and Independence Order 2nd Class, and in February 1953 the title of Hero of the Republic, the highest honour for a citizen of the DPRK. At the same time he saw to it that copies of the decorations of the orders concerned were sent to him, who was then in the area held by the enemy.

In August 1990 the great Comrade Kim Jong Il bestowed on him the National Reunification Prize and saw to it that the remains of his wife, Ri Mun Gi, who had passed away ten years before were buried in his grave at the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery.

Who dare babble that our comrades who have been buried in the ridges of Mount Jiri were miserable souls crushed by the wheel of history?

The souls of the heroes of Mount Jiri, those of brave fighters, known and unknown, who died heroic deaths in the guerrilla districts of the Halla, Thaebaek, Odae and Togyu Mountains, and in the streets, and those of comrades who died, unflinchingly fighting in prison or on the scaffold, live eternally in the broad embraces of the great leader Kim Il Sung and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il, and will remain alive in the hearts of our people for ever.

The Hearts of Comrades in South Korea

The winter of 1951 was creeping up. Winter was the hardest season for the guerrillas, because, in addition to difficulties with supplies, the "punitive" forces mounted their offensives in winter, when the trees were bare of leaves and there was little cover.

That winter the south Korean army had been actively preparing for an offensive, laying telephone lines along every mountain ridge. A local organization informed us that the front line units were likely to be called back for the annihilation of the guerrillas, taking advantage of the deadlock at the front.

To make matters worse, there was a sudden increase in the number of men suffering from fever. Patients were shifted to a "field hospital" in Taesong Valley, which was camouflaged with bushes.

Yang Ki Chul, who was a doctor and chief of the medical deparment of South Kyongsang Province, called it recurrent fever. It was said to have been spread among the guerrillas by germ bombs dropped by US airplanes.

As expected, some time later the south Korean army began its offensive. The local people who had sought refuge in the mountains were sometimes hit by enemy strafing, from the air while lighting fires to prepare meals.

At that time the seat of the provincial Party committee was in Kalbawi Valley. Since in the daytime the south Korean troops used to comb the valleys for guerrillas, the committee members hid themselves on the mountain slopes or took refuge in the forest.

I, together with some of my comrades, took refuge in a cave. From the outside it was very difficult to discern whether it was a cave or not, but it was not big enough to stand up in, and so it was very uncomfortable.

We soon ran out of food, as the snow made it almost impossible to find acorns and wild fruits. The enemy's offensive also made it dangerous to leave the cave.

One night Comrade Jo Yong Rae urged everybody to give me their emergency rations, saying that I would find it harder to survive in the south because I had no acquaintances nearby, and my north Korean accent might easily lead to my arrest. The rations were two handfuls of unhulled barley.

How can I ever forget the sincere heart of that comrade from south Korea on Mount Jiri? I often remembered Jo's care for me during the long years of my painful prison life. Although he had passed away, his warm comradeship was always alive in my heart, and it seemed as if it heated my cold cell.

I stayed in the cave for about ten days. Eventually, when sounds of the south Korean army were no longer heard, I crept stealthily out of the cave. No soldiers could be seen on the mountain ridge. When I crept up there, wondering if this perhaps could be some trap, I saw a girl sitting on a rock at a distance. On closer scrutiny I saw that it was Pae Suk Hwan.

She had joined the volunteers when the war broke out. Dispatched to the Namhae (South Coast) Brigade, she fought courageously at the front in the far south. As the temporary strategic retreat of the People's Army began following the US army's landing in the Inchon area on September 28, 1950, Pae, following the commander of the Namhae Brigade, retreated to Kuhyon-dong, Puju County, and in the spring of 1951 returned to the guerrilla unit under the guidance of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee.

With the intention of helping to liberate her hometown from the US army, she came to the guerrilla area, bringing Choe Sun Hui, who was a dancer and singer, with her. Both were beautiful, clever and lively girls.

The following anecdote testifies to Pae's personality.

A commander of the guerrilla unit called on Ho Tong Uk, the vice-chairman of the Party committee, and said that he wanted to marry Pae Suk Hwan. Ho Tong Uk advised him to tell her directly, because even life in mountains could not exclude love, and love affairs were troublesome to deal with in some respects. So the commander called Pae Suk Hwan to his side and confessed his love for her.

At this she flatly refused his proposal: "The reason I came to the mountains was to fight the US imperialists and the Syngman Rhee clique, not to marry. How dare you think about marriage when our soldiers are shedding their blood at the front?"

After that the commander said no more about the matter.

Pae Suk Hwan's rejection of the commander without hesitation showed that she was a model of a Korean woman of mettle.

I believe that a society in which the masses can freely express their

own will even before men of power is a healthy society. Such a society encourages the development of the consciousness of the masses, and so individualism, selfishness and authoritarianism cannot gain a foothold.

The district held by the guerrillas, though only a small part of south Korea, was such a society. How could the people who lived there be victims of ignorance, temptation and coercion?...

It is uncertain whether Pae Suk Hwan loved the commander but kept from him in order to struggle better against the enemy. At that time for us the fate of the fatherland was more precious than our individual lives. We thought of nothing but the country's destiny and victory in the war.

Some time later, believing that the enemy had raised the siege, we decided to fetch the rest of the emergency rations we had buried in the forest. At that time we had eaten all the barley we kept in the cave and in fact had been starving for several days. Pae Suk Hwan was shot in the stomach by enemy troops lying in ambush near the place where our emergency rations were buried. "I will die and become part of the soil of the Motherland. I will rest with the Motherland forever,:" she said, before drawing her last breath.

It is only renegades who slander such true hearts buried on Mount Jiri with words of futility and scepticism. I should like to shout out to them:

"No longer insult the beautiful soul of this land...."

Records of Atrocities

One day in February 1951 I was on my way to Hadong to compile newspaper, in company with a few comrades whose aim was to obtain provisions.

Our party reached the end of Korumi Valley in Sichon Sub-county, Sanchong County, and from there was ascending a slope leading to Taesong Valley, when we came across the corpse of a farmer dressed in a Korean-style cotton coat and trousers, and straw sandals. The darkness of blood congealed on his chest indicated that much time had passed since his death.

Comrade An Yong Chun from Hamgyong Province looked at the farmer's tanned face and prepared to bury the corpse. Because we had no digging tools and the ground was frozen anyway, we gathered stones and piled them over the corpse. No one uttered a word until the job was finished, and then we stood for a long time with our heads hanging down before this ordinary farmer's tomb.

Since the south Korean army considered such murders to be ordinary

affairs, no wonder one of their men shot himself to death to escape capture by us! Somebody remarked that the farmer might have fled from the massacre at Kochang committed by the south Korean army a few days previously.

The Kochang massacre occurred on February 10. The guerrilla unit under the Sanchong County Party Committee, located in Obu Sub-County, Sanchong County, raided the police station in Sinwon Sub-County. Some of the enemy were killed and the others fled to nearly Kochang. As a result, the Sinwon County area was temporarily controlled by the guerrillas. On February 8 the 3rd Battalion, 9th Regiment, 11th Division of the south Korean army, which was called the "Hwarang Division", occupied Kwaejong-ri, Sinwon Sub-County. The guerrillas had already moved to another place, with only a short engagement during the withdrawal.

On February 10 the 3rd Battalion rounded up 136 young men in six villages in the area, drove them to nearby Paksin Valley and machine-gunned them to death.

On February 11 the enemy gathered all the people who remained in this area, except for the families of south Korean army, police and public officials at the playground of the Sinwon Primary School under the pretense of evacuation. Then they took them to a deep mountain valley and shot them to death. Most of them were old people, women and children.

It was learned later that a total of 719 people were massacred at that time. With a view to covering up the crime, the enemy poured gasoline over the corpses and set fire to them. Then they blasted a mountain slope nearby to cover them with soil.

This barbarous and despicable atrocity is clear evidence that the United States and the Syngman Rhee puppet regime regarded the entire Korean nation as their enemy.

The south Korean authorities made every effort to cover up this terrible incident. Sin Song Mo, the then minister of national defence of south Korea, claimed that the south Korean army had only mopped up "communist bandits", not innocent people, and then internally instructed his men to pigeonhole the case.

The commander of the 11th Division attempted to shirk his responsibility by saying: "Could anyone issue such an order, which goes against common sense?"

As the public strongly demanded an inquiry into the incident, a fact-finding group was formed. Its on-the-spot investigation was hindered by the south Korean authorities, who disguised south Korean troops as guerrillas, who fired on the group. What a vicious and dirty act!

Alarmed at the mounting anti-government feelings, the court at Taegu

that year sentenced the regimental and battalion commanders to death and some others to lengthy prison terms. However, all the defendants were released after a little over a year. And of these, Kim Jong Won was even appointed chief of the Police Bureau of North Jolla Province. Not a single person was punished of those who killed 719 innocent people. What does this mean? It means that they acted in accordance with a lawful order. Who issued that order? The United States did. In the process of the court trial a defendant testified that he only executed Order No.5: "While carrying out the operation, regard inhabitants remaining in the unoccupied districts as the enemy and kill them." From this we can get a glimpse of what was behind their black curtain.

It is an established fact that from the beginning of the war the US commander of the occupation troops held supreme sway over the south Korean army. And the intention and character of the above-mentioned order was the same as those given by all the successive commanders of US troops stationed in south Korea.

When the April 3 incident occurred on Jeju Island in 1948, Colonel Brown, who was the commander of US troops stationed there, said, "I'm not interested in the reason for this operation. My mission is nothing but suppression." He ordered his men: "Regard all areas four kilometres off the coast as enemy territory." This implied that all people found in areas four kilometres off the coast should be considered enemies and shot, regardless of whether they were old men, children or women. This has a sinister connection with the aforesaid Order No.5.

The soldiers of the south Korean army were nothing more than puppets who acted in accordance with the purposes and orders of the United States. They were no more than fingers pulling the triggers of US guns. This is more tragic than detestable, and at the same time a disgrace to the Korean nation.

The Hamphyong massacre was no less horrific than the Kochang atrocity. The enemy machine-gunned hundreds of innocent civilians in cold blood. They rabbled, "If there are survivors among you, it is owing to the grace of God."

On February 8, before entering Kochang, the 3rd Battalion, 9th Regiment, 11th Division of the south Korean army massacred old men, women and minors – 183 in all–in Sichon Sub-County of Sanchong County. It murdered 380 people from eight villages, including Kahyon and Jopchon, in a paddy field in Panggok-ri, Kumso Sub-County. It shot to death 370 people in Soju, Songok, Jigok and six other villages of Ryurim Sub-County, Hamyang County, adjacent to Sanchong County.

Forty years later members of 200 families wailed before memorial

tablets at the same time on the anniversary of February 8, 1951 – children bereaved of their fathers or mothers, women who lost their husbands, old men bereaved of their offspring.... A reporter wrote after a tour of Mount Jiri at that time: "Mount Jiri is a sea of mourning."

These incidents were buried in the darkness of the past because most of the people involved were killed or their bereaved families cannot say a word due to the anticommunist pressure applied by the flunkeyist traitors. Many people, who demanded investigations into the facts of these incidents, were put in jail, labelled pro-communist elements. In today's south Korean society the innocent people who were murdered are called criminals, while murder is called justice.

However, history inexorably brings to light the truth, and such atrocities are becoming known to the world one after another, though much belatedly. The actual circumstances of these incidents have been revealed even in some south Korean publications, which characterized these evil deeds as "barbarity caused by ignorance and power."

The memoirs I wrote in south Korea did not mention them because they were already known both at home and abroad. The reason why I now touch on the enemy's atrocities, as I re-write my memoirs, is because the south Korean authorities refuse to return Kim In So and Ham Se Hwan, comrades of mine, to north Korea because they are "violators of the laws who killed innocent people". A saying "the thief turns on the master of the house with a club" fits this case. They once tried to make up a story that the Kochang and Hamphyong incidents were caused by communist forces, but their true colours were exposed. Their brazen assertions can have no credibility whatsoever.

In May 1980 the south Korean army slaughtered thousands of patriotic citizens, dyeing the whole of Kwangju City with blood. Some day they may forge a lie that the Kwangju atrocity was "committed by communists".

In order to make up such lies they have planted poisonous weeds of "anticommunism" in every nook of south Korea, noxious plants of "anticommunism" which have been produced by ignorance and prejudice and grown up with US-made and Japan-made fertilizer. With a view to rooting out those noxious plants, my comrades and I fought and shed blood....

Telling South Korean Comrades about North Korea

After burying the corpse of the nameless farmer, our party began to climb a high pass through a forest.

The previous evening Comrade Kwon Yong Thae took out emergency ration, and we had eaten our last meal and handed over the rest of our rice gruel to the radio operators.

We ascended the mountain pass, gasping for breath. When we sat down in the forest to have a rest we suddenly heard gunfire. Quite surprised, we glared around and finally spotted Comrade Jong Yong Sop crawling towards us. He had been dispatched to the Hadong County Party Committee and had been giving guidance to the work of the Agyang Sub-County Party Committee. We learned that on the way to returning to the mountains for the summing-up of his work he encountered an ambush laid by the remnants of south Korean army and that he had just escaped from an ambush.

Comrade Kwon Yong Thae ran to him and hugged him. It was only when we shouted: "Don't stay there. Quickly come into the forest" that the both crawled up to us.

Comrade Jong Yong Sop reported:

"Owing to the recent offensives of the enemy the Hadong County Party Committee was dispersed. Nobody was at the liaison place, so I am on my way back." And he asked where I was going.

I replied that I was going to Hadong for news coverage. At this he asked in a worried voice:

"Since liaison line was cut off, why do you go there?"

"Did you have lunch?" he asked.

"Lunch? We have not even had breakfast," one of us replied. Jong took out three glutinous rice-cakes from his knapsack, saying that a functionary of the sub-county Party committee had visited his home to hold a memorial service for his grandfather and brought the rice-cakes as offerings.

We divided them up evenly. When I put a slice of rice-cake into my mouth, how glutinous and tasty it was! I wondered if there had ever been such a taste in the world.

"That's all. And you must pay for it," said Comrade Jong to me.

I knew what he meant. The previous summer we had eaten nothing for several days and had gone to him and found him giving political education to mountain dwellers on the road behind Jungsan village. Comrade Jong got an ox for us and "paid" for it by getting me to tell the villagers and him about life in north Korea.

Eating the meat soup mixed with wild herbs, I told them of the happenings in north Korea during the five years of peaceful construction after liberation. I talked late into the night.

Now he wanted to hear more about north Korea. All the comrades in south Korea liked to hear stories about north Korea. Why wouldn't they

do so? That life was the one they were struggling for at the risk of their lives; that society was the world for the people they were determined to build in the reunified motherland.

"Well, of course I'll pay for it", I answered. Just then Comrade Mok Yong Il, chairman of the Hadong County Party Committee, was seen coming toward us, bringing an orderly with him. As soon as he saw us, the orderly prepared to fire his rifle at us; Comrade Mok froze in his tracks. Then, when Comrade Jong Yong Sop appeared and beckoned to him, Comrade Mok grinned, and put away the hand grenade he had taken out to blow himself up. He ran towards Jong and hugged him.

Under pressure from the enemy's offensives Comrade Mok shifted the headquarters of the county Party committee to a bamboo grove in Taesong Valley. At that time he was on his way to the emergency liaison place in order to restore the severed liaison system.

Comrade Jong left for the provincial headquarters to inform them of this situation, and we departed for Taesong Valley, following Comrade Mok. When we got to the destination, crossing steep mountain ridges and pushing through deep snow, we found guerrillas there cleaning their weapons around a bonfire built near a big rock, beating time to the humming with their feet. We looked in admiration at these men who were in such high spirits. As soon as Mok Yong Il said that we had had nothing to eat on the journey, the guerrillas unhesitatingly took out a few handfuls of unhulled barley from their knapsacks. It was not until I had hastily eaten my share that I sensed that it was their supper we had consumed.

I was deeply touched by this humane warmth. At the thought that these men were ready even for death, though in rags and their faces blackened with smoke, I felt great respect for them surging within me. For what are they struggling in the mountains, suffering all sorts of hardships? Probably so that even if they themselves cannot, at least their offspring may live in such a society as that in north Korea, I thought.

I talked with the soldiers, warming my hands over the fire. They asked me about the recent offensives of the south Korean army, the general war situation and the five years of peaceful construction in the north. They bombarded me with questions as soon as they realized that I was a northerner.

I told them about how I got the manager of the Hungnam Fertilizer Plant to study.

A comrade said, "I don't think it to be another man's problem. I was not so zealous in my studies either." At this all laughed, I remember.

I also told about happenings during the period of the agrarian reform. Another soldier said, "We also enjoyed such a time, though short," and grinned.

They used to listen to stories about north Korea, smiles on their faces, as if in a dream. Even now the images of their faces still linger in my mind's eye.

Ah, if only one of them could have come over to the northern land together with me!...

Nights on Mount Jiri

The writers of the novels *Southern Army* and *Mount Jiri* and the producer of a TV series which depicted the guerrillas on Mount Jiri described the guerrillas as miserably dying of hunger and cold, as if the history of that period was a saga full of despair, lamentation and regret.

However, we were not in despair, nor even discouraged by the enemy's siege. Their view comes from ignorance of guerrilla warfare. By nature, guerrilla warfare is a method of struggle which is performed in the enemy's territory, is not it? Guerrillas must stage raids and swiftly withdraw to avoid a head-on collision with the enemy as far as they can. In a sense, guerrilla warfare is a fight with the enemy in pursuit.

Only those who have no knowledge of guerrilla warfare think that the guerrillas of Mount Jiri were constantly on the run from the enemy and dying in despair and regret. Such people's military knowledge would be limited to what they had learned in the US manual of tactics. Nothing more need be said.

In our life, too, there was laughter and song. I still remember a night when we sang songs in the wild bamboo grove in Taesong Valley. We sang in turns, with many of the guerrillas singing songs of north Korea, I remember. One sang the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* and another, *Advance and Advance*, saying that they had learned them from a performance given by the People's Army Song and Dance Ensemble at the Pumin Hall in Seoul.

I do not remember which song I sang. Perhaps it was *Song of the Red Flag.*

A guerrilla called Comrade Kim recited a poem. I do not recollect his name correctly. It was Kim X Ryong or Kim Tok X, I think. Anyway, I thought then that his name was similar to that of Kim Tok Ryong, an endorser for my admission to the Party.

A few lines of the poem go:

Is our Youth to give ear to an old dirty fellow,
Talking in his sleep,

Senile, near the hour of his death
To re-build the crumbled old house?
...

To neo-imperialists and
A foolish old pup going to the next world?
Let's give them the fare and
Send them to hell.

I was pleased with this poem and said to him, "You're a real poet!"

But he smiled and said that the author of the poem was a certain Yu Jin O.

Later I came to know that, while fighting in the guerrilla army on Mount Jiri before the Korean war, the poet was captured and killed by the enemy and that the above-mentioned poem was recited by him at the time of the International Youth Day held in Seoul in 1946.

While serving a ten-month sentence in Sodaemun prison in Seoul he sang the *Song of the Red Flag* at a Christmas Day concert.

After his release from the prison he went to Jinyong in South Kyongsang Province as a member of a cultural work corps, when farmers traveled for miles to welcome him. And as he announced that he could not recite a poem because he had been given an order to keep silent, they cried, "Well, to just see your face will be enough!" it was said. This proves how much he moved the masses. In pouring rain, he appeared before them, raised his fist high above his head and mumbled a poem to himself:

Again and again
Swallowing the prohibited words,
One body supports the sky
On a land like the teeth of a saw.

In late 1948, a few days after his marriage, he entered Mount Jiri. It was said that the young couple spent their first night together, exposed to the cold dew on the hill behind his house because they were raided by a gang of ruffians. In 1949 he was captured while fighting on Mount Jiri. He braved all sorts of torture, and at last was murdered.

At the military tribunal which sentenced him to death, a public prosecutor asked, "Have you ever agitated 'rioters' by writing illicit poems in prison?"

"I'm a poet," Yu answered. "Why is this an illicit poem?" And then he

recited the poem, *Ah, Northern Sky I Want to See You!* The court was in an uproar.

The judge said, "I ask you finally: Does the defendant support south Korea or north Korea?"

"Haven't you the ability to judge even such a thing? I'm a citizen of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Yu answered loudly. He was then 28 years old.

Afterwards I often thought of him. When I first sat down in my prison cell, the verses of the poem, *Ah, Northern Sky I Want to See You!* sprang into my mind of their own accord. At the time of the April 19 Uprising in 1960 I thought of the poem, *For Whom Is Our Youth?* And after release from prison the poem, *Together with the Motherland* haunted my mind.

It can be said that he was alive in the hearts of many comrades and me during lengthy prison term.

My wife gave me a book about him. It told how in the late autumn of 1950 Yu's wife, Kim Kum Nam, who had been wounded,came over to the north with her daughter who was only one year old, that later she worked as a member of the Party Committee of the Jaeryong Food-Processing Factory and as a work team leader and that her daughter, Yu Hyang Sun, was a brilliant student.

They would not know how Yu Jin O, who died in 1949, could become a comrade of Ri In Mo.A revolutionary obtains comrades on the basis of faith and will....

When I fought on Mount Jiri there was a writer serving in the guerrilla army there. I heard of him from Kil Thaek, but do not remember whether I directly met him. I probably edited his stories in the guerrilla newspaper. It seems to me that he fought as an ordinary combatant.

It was after my return to the north that I came to know that the above-mentioned war correspondent was Ri Tong Gyu, who was engaged in the KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federacio) literature movement before the August 15 liberation, pursued literary activities in Seoul after liberation and after coming over to Pyongyang wrote many novels while working as a department head of a university of education.

As a war correspondent, he went to the south following a unit of the People's Army. At the time of the temporary strategic retreat of the People's Army he entered Mount Jiri. He took part in the battles at Sichon market, Machon and many others. It is said that, having been betrayed by a turncoat and being surrounded by the enemy, on March 15, 1952 he blew himself up with a hand grenade, shouting, "Long live General Kim Il Sung!"

An officer of a special unit of the south Korean army, who saw his heroic death with his own eyes, wrote later as follows:

"Since Ri Tong Gyu was a writer well-known in south Korea, if he had surrendered and written a few popular novels he could have lived in comfort. I can never understand why he chose death."

It is said that in Ri's knapsack there was an unfinished manuscript titled, *Song of the Jiri Mount Guerrillas.*

Much excited by the lines of the song, I quote it here:

Grasping the peaks of Mount Jiri,
Guerrillas cross and recross slopes and passes.
The gusty wind carried our shouts.
The rivers of the broad plains sing of our victory.
...

When I was in prison I once met a comrade from the guerrilla force in the Thaebaek Mountains. He said that there was a writer in his unit. He went on to say in admiration that he was a war correspondent from the north who had joined the guerrillas, and that when he was surrounded by south Korean troops in Wonju he blew himself up, shouting, "Long live General Kim Il Sung!"

On inquiry after my return to the north, it turned out that this hero's name was Kim Sa Ryang.

It was well known that in the days of Japanese imperialist rule, as a winner of the "Akudagawa Prize" he caused a sensation and took part in the building of the NAPF (Nippon Artista Proleta Federacio) literature,too.

When he lived in Yanan in China, he wrote a lengthy account of military action called, *Nomamanri,* and after liberation he wrote a long drama, *Thunder,* portraying General Kim Il Sung and had it performed on the stage. Being such a man, he chose death rather than capture by the enemy.

True literary men are people who regard faith, conscience and principle as their life and soul: If this is so, can the authors of *Southern Army* and *Mount Jiri* be called true literary men?

As night fell the cold wind froze the bodies of the guerrillas, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, but they pictured a reunified motherland in their minds and were determined to struggle on, lest the blood of their comrades who laid down their lives for the motherland should have been shed in vain. That night we stayed awake, thawing the frozen land with revolutionary songs.

Those who have never lived in the mountains can not realize the

warmth and romance of the nights when we slept on dried leaves spread on the frozen ground. It is still vivid in my memory how I used to look at the Great Bear in the sky seen between the branches of trees.

Death of Chairwoman of a Women's Union Organization

The next day we left the guerrillas and arrived at Janggo Hill, having struggled knee-deep snow across the mountains and Chongdae Valley.The sun had set by that time and darkness had fallen. I wondered where I should go to sleep. I knew that the Jinju City Party Committee was based in a cave near Sangbong, so I went there. I was welcomed by the organizational department head and saw that many comrades were suffering from fever there.

After a while the chairwoman of the Jinju City Women's Union Committee entered the cave. The organizational department head was surprised at her sudden appearance, especially as she had a stern expression on her face; she usually looked as gentle as a woman who could cope with all the difficulties of life. She had been expected to return somewhat later, for she had gone to Jinju to take care of some matter.

After a short silence, she explained that she had called at a friend's house in Jinju, where she had met a person who was said to have given himself up to the police after deserting the guerrillas. Feigning ignorance of the fact, she had greeted him. But his behaviour had seemed strange, so she asked her friend where the toilet was. She took her coat off and hung it up to avoid suspicion, and then calmly left the room. Escaping through the toilet window, she returned to the mountains.

After listening to her story the department head said that he was suspicious of her friend, but she protested: "She lived next door to us in a village four kilometres from Masan. In the vegetable season we used to go to Masan to sell vegetables together. I was like a sister to her. She was kindhearted and a very practical housewife who took good care of her parents-in-law, to say nothing of her husband. She was a reliable woman well spoken of by the villagers, but misfortune fell on her peaceful family after the US army entered the land following liberation.

"One evening her family were eating supper, when four US soldiers burst into the house. Driving her family out of the room at the point of a rifle, one of the soldiers dragged her into another room and, stripping her naked, raped her. Another soldier kept guard with a rifle in front of the door, and another one at the brushwood gate. After they had come at her

in turns, she fainted. The family left the village furtively, regarding the incident as a disgrace.

"A few years later I met her in Jinju. Her hatred of the US army was then beyond words. How could she ever forget the disgrace while she was still alive? It is impossible that she, who wept so sorrowfully when my husband was killed, could be in collusion with informers."

As the chairwoman's story ended, suddenly the atmosphere became solemn. I thought about what made our sweet-tempered women so strong.

There were many women in the guerrilla unit on Mount Jiri. In everyday life they looked as gentle as lambs, but they were just as heroic in battle as men. In fact, they were stronger and more persevering in tiding over difficulties than men.

The organizational department head said, breaking the silence:

"Now the comrade chairwoman of the Women's Union committee has returned safely, let's go and gather some honey."

Sweet things were rare treats for guerrillas, so all of us were interested in his suggestion. I was told that there were beehives in an ancient hollow oak tree.

After about one hour our comrades came back with a basinful of honey. First, some was given to the patients. Having heard a guerrilla say that mountain honey was a good tonic, I ate mine ravenously. As a result I got intoxicated with honey.

Just then word came from the sentry that south Korean troops were attacking. While looking for a shelter after hurriedly moving the patients to a safe place and disposing of documents, someone said that there was another cave above the lower one.

The only question was who would stand guard over the lower cave. Otherwise the enemy troops would search the vicinity thoroughly.

The chairwoman said, "I will keep guard here. Go up quickly. I will pretend to have taken refuge in the mountains. Don't worry about me." She strove to put us at ease with these words, as we had sometimes escaped danger by pretending to be civilian refugees.

We moved into the upper cave. Fearing that she might be tortured into revealing our hiding place, we got hand grenades ready and listened for sounds from the lower cave.

Soon we heard enemy troops entering the cave. An officer shouted. "Who are you?"

"I live in Jungsan village. Farming kept me from going to Sichon. So I took refuge here," replied the chairwoman.

No sooner had she spoken than we heard the man say:

"Don't lie! If you tell us where the others are hiding, I'll spare your life. Otherwise, you'll die. You bitch!"

Sensing danger, she retorted sharply to his abusive words:

"What? Haven't you parents? It's only your business to make women disgraceful, so you know nothing but such dirty words, eh?"

"Do you want to be killed?"

"Yes, I do. I'll kill you first and die myself."

Suddenly there was silence. It was obvious that she had taken out a hand grenade. After a while her sonorous voice was heard: "Long live General Kim Il Sung!"

This was followed by a loud explosion and the agonized screams of the enemy soldiers.

Silence reigned, but her last shout still rang in our ears.

We heard other soldiers clambering up, and then noisily removing the dead bodies.

Some one sobbed in a corner of our cave.

Some time later we went down there. We found the cave spattered with blood. The chairwoman's corpse was nowhere to be seen. We took off our caps, expressing our sorrow at her death. Holding back tears, we kept deep in our minds her dying cry.

Criticism and Comradeship

Owing to her heroic death the noncombatants escaped danger. We left there and set up our base at the foot of a ridge of the Phokphosu Valley which was thought to be a comparatively safe place. Nevertheless, there was no really safe place due to the general offensives the south Korean army launched in those days. No sooner had we settled down there than enemy troops appeared in the vicinity. Fortunately, it was not because they knew we were there. So we headed for the next concentration point by ones and twos, hiding in gaps between rocks in order to avoid the enemy search parties. When we arrived at the end of a ridge which, going down from Jung Peak, stretched out alongside Ssukbat Hill, a voice challenged, "Who are you?" from the ridge, accompanied with the click of a rifle trigger. We threw ourselves flat on the ground. We were at a loss what to do. Was it the enemy or one of us?...

Comrade Kang Myong Sok nudged me and said, "Stand up and find out who it is." He was a Party official with rich experience, who had joined the guerrilla army before the war. I obeyed him because of my lack of experience in guerrilla warfare. I shouted:

"Who are you? I'm Ri In Mo. I compile the newspaper at the wireless squad."

The other man appeared in front of me. He turned out to be the commander of the guards company of the provincial Party committee. He said, "Go up along that valley. The supply department is waiting for you, preparing supper."

I was particularly glad to hear his Hamgyong Province accent. However, somehow he had an displeased expression on his face. He had been dispatched to the Mokpho region as a member of the political operative corps and at the time of the retreat had joined the guerrilla forces on Mount Jiri.

Taking Comrade Kang Myong Sok with me, I went up along the valley and ate rice-balls. The guards company commander came up to me and said, "We thought that the enemy had withdrawn, but we could not be sure. I could have shot you in the dark. Why did you act so rashly?"

Dejected, I explained the situation. He clicked his tongue and advised:

"For the lack in experience you might do so but you must know it was adventure."

Only then knew I why his look was so serious when we had met first. He continued:

"Would it be right to be killed so pointlessly? We have been dispatched and given orders to return after reunifying the country, haven't we? Let's live worthily and die worthy death!"

I cannot properly express the deep emotion I felt then. That comrade, so kindhearted, was captured badly wounded and died in Kwangju prison in 1953. It was really tragic....

By the way, he reported that incident to the organizing committee of the provincial Party committee, which criticised Kang Myong Sok for instigating me to reveal myself in dangerous situation. He accepted the criticism and called on me to criticise him too. After that we became really good comrades. During the enemy's offensive in January 1952 Comrades Kang Myong Sok and Jo Yong Rae were killed in a battle in Taesong Valley...

Another event occurs to my mind. As we sat around a bonfire one night with the wireless squad, holding a self-criticism session, Comrade O Chol Nam, a member of the wireless squad, arrived and gasped out that there was a pile of dismembered bodies near a large birch tree.

At dawn we went to have a look, and found that what he had thought to be dismembered corpses were in fact only tangled roots.

At first we laughed. But then we realized why he had made that mis-

take. Corpses of people killed by the south Korean army and police were spread on every ridge and corner of Mount Jiri. They murdered anyone they found and included them in the tally of guerrillas killed. No doubt many innocent refugees in the mountains who did not even know the word "guerrilla" were included in the figure of guerrillas "annihilated" by the enemy. They held that the people they massacred in Kochang and Hamphyong, too, were "communist bandits".

Did O Chol Nam, who had ever been composed and fearless, mistake tree roots for the corpses of limbed people!

My story seems going to excessively different direction.

Murmuring, "Surely, corpses were here", Comrade O continuously looked at vicinity. I pursuaded him to go down.

Climbing down with Comrade O, I saw what looked like a child sitting in the woods. Wondering what a child was doing alone in such a wild place, I approached and asked quietly: "Who are you?"

At this a smart and pretty girl greeted me with joy, saying, "You are a comrade of the newspaper team, aren't you? I know you. I'm the head of the educational department of the Sanchong County Women's Union Committee. I'm coming back after dealing with some affairs in the village."

As night fell, a path was not seen and enemy troops were found everywhere she went. So, she was waiting until dawn, she explained.

How dreadful it was for young girl that she alone spent the night in the wood! In addition, she was extremely tired and had not eaten for two days.

She was so hungry that she could not walk well. We helped her back to our camp and gave her a meal before giving her a guide to lead her to Sanchong County.

She had been born in Kurye in South Jolla Province. She had studied at the Kurye Girls High School and enlisted in the volunteer army, fighting on the Rakdong River front before joining the guerrillas on Mount Jiri.

One day we received a letter from her asking if we could send her a fountain pen if we had an extra one. At that time ball pens had not been invented, and fountain pens were rare and valuable things in the remote mountains.

It was a lot of trouble to procure one for her, but when we finally did so we were overjoyed at the thought of her, pen in hand....

In this way we fought the enemy, thawing the frozen soil of Mount Jiri with our warm and friendly affection. We were happiest when we could make another comrade happy. Life as a guerrilla in the mountains is unthinkable apart from such comradeship.

Unforgettable Flower Buds of Mount Jiri (1)

South Korea's Capital Division, which had been called back from the front and had massed around Mount Jiri, launched its first all-out offensive against the guerrillas in December 1951. They attacked throughout the winter, but the December offensive was the biggest of the kind.

They climbed up in thigh-deep snow, forming a ring around the peaks at intervals of merely two arms' lengths between each other, searching for guerrillas. This was modelled on the "combing tactics" Japanese troops had applied against the anti-Japanese guerrillas. This was natural because the majority of the officers of the south Korean army had been trained in the Japanese or Manchukuo armies.

Exhausted and hungry, we traversed the mid-slopes of the hills, avoiding the enemy troops, and decided to march in the direction of Samjang Sub-County, Sanchong County, from Hadong. At dawn we climbed Ssari Peak, braving a snowstorm all night.

A woman who worked at the Jinyang County Women's Union Committee took rice from a cloth wrapper and began to cook gruel with it, using melted snow. But we had no chance to enjoy it, as Chairman Nam Kyong U suddenly stood up and shouted, "The enemy!" No sooner had he warned us than bullets started flying. Leaving the gruel and the kettle behind, we ran towards a ridge. Bullets rained thick and fast around us. We were stung by rock splinters and shrapnel.Nevertheless, we kept on running. Vice-Chairman Ho Tong Uk, who was running ahead of me, took off his overcoat and threw it away. I picked it up. He then took something from his pocket and threw it away also. I picked this up too.

Once we got over the ridge the shooting stopped and the pursuers gave up the chase. We sat in the snow and caught our breath. Handing the overcoat back to Ho Tong Uk, I said jokingly that he should pay for it. At this, he explained that he had thrown it away in order to run faster. What he had taken out of his pocket was his socks. I wonder how breathless he was to throw away even his socks. Since he was over 50 years old, it would be harder for him to run. Nevertheless, he organized a scout team to explore a path and rose to his feet together with Nam Kyong U in order to see if there were any stragglers.

On Janggo Peak, facing us, south Korean soldiers were gathered around a fire. We found that Kil Thaek and Song Jung Myong were absent, but because the area was swarming with enemy troops we could not go back to search for them. The scout team reported that it seemed

that there were no enemy troops on the ridge leading to Anjang Rock. So we started in that direction.

That night we entered Jogae Valley, an emergency assembly point, and made a signal. A reply signal was received, and Kil Thaek rushed up to us. He sobbed in my bosom and explained how he had survived miraculously:

The enemy's bullets flew up to us. Running on together with us, he fell over something, so he was captured by the enemy troops. Considering him to be a little boy, they coaxed him, saying, "If you lead us to your cadres, you'll be alive." Kil Thaek answered that he would do as was told. The enemy took away the magazine from his carbine before returning it back to him and then demanded him to go ahead. Walking ahead of them, Kil Thaek thought of the way of running away. They came up to a narrow rock standing across the ridge.When they were slow-going behind him passing through the narrow gap between rocks, he rolled down the rocks and was successful in running away. We were full of admiration at this young boy's amazing courage and presence of mind. We followed Jangdae Valley towards Anjang Rock. Our hunger was beyond description because we had not eaten for several days. Some days before I had stressed that each of us must carry emergency rations with him, and not leave others to carry food. I had explained that the best way was to carry a long and narrow rice bag made of cotton over one's shoulders. But the others had failed to do this. Now they were reading my mind, guessing that I had prepared emergency rations. And they were right. As soon as I unslung my rice bag they were overjoyed. The ration amounted to one *toe.* We cooked gruel with my rice, and some one took out salt from his knapsack.

As we ate word came from the sentry that enemy soldiers had appeared at Anjang Rock. We packed our things in haste and dived into some bushes. As we did so we saw seven or eight enemy soldiers climbing down the Anjangbawi ridge.

"Those bastards!" said Kil Thaek, glaring down at them.

They seemed to be heading for our former base, where we had hidden stencils and paper, which we then regarded as priceless materials. About one hour later we saw flames in that area, and there was no doubt that they were burning the stencils and paper. I repressed an urge to run and quench the flames, when Kil Thaek proposed setting up an ambush on the path along which the enemy would return, saying, "I have a score to settle with them."

In addition to Kil Thaek, a few other guerrillas volunteered. After giving cautions in battle, we sent them. After a while automatic rifle shots

echoed, and the ambush team returned and reported that four of the enemy had been killed, while the other three had fled.

Kil Thaek grinned at me, as if this alone was enough to avenge himself and me upon the enemy.

A short while later the enemy launched a major offensive. I was seriously wounded in the battle in Taesong Valley and captured. So I lost all contact with Kil Thaek. He was a poor boy, whose parents had been murdered by the enemy. So everybody treated him very well. I always took him with me, as if he were my own son. He was really a calm and thoughtful boy. I solemnly advised him not to take rice-cakes or other food with him in the course of accomplishing tasks. He did as he was told.

At the time of the Yangyang battle Kil Thaek accompanied a comrade on a mission to collect data for newspaper. The latter gave a jar of honey to Kil Thaek, who was to come back first. Later the comrade returned and asked me if I had received the honey. On hearing that I had not, he asked Kil Thaek about it, and Kil Thaek said, "Since I had promised Ri In Mo not to take anything to eat with me in the course of operations I could not bring it. But I returned after hiding it in the crack of a rock, as I did not want to throw it away."

That is how simple and honest Kil Thaek was.

I would like to give an account of Kil Thaek's death, as I heard it from a comrade of mine in jail.

He became an orderly after I was taken prisoner. One day he went to Talttugi Hill to meet a man who was returning from a mission at Jinju. It took him the whole night to get at the appointed spot. There he signalled his arrival. The man was said to have snapped on a lighter in stead of the signal of his arrival. In the light Kil Thaek saw that he was in a south Korean army uniform. The strange way he clicked the lighter led Kil Thaek to the conclusion that the man had turned his coat and had led the south Korean army soldiers. He was right. Bullets began to fly from all directions. Kil Thaek fired back. At this the turncoat shouted:

"Lie down! I'll save you at all costs."

Kil Thaek replied, "I didn't know you were such a man." and collapsed after firing his last bullet.

On hearing this news, I could not sleep all night, for I felt as grief-stricken as if I lost my own son.

Would be one such a boy who died in battle, rifle in hand, at so young age as Kil Thaek?

Here is a story of another boy.

He was 13 years old and was highly spoken of by everybody. He was

Kang Pyong Gu, and orderly of Commander Jin Jong Su of the 305th Unit, which was also called the Togyusan Unit, based in Wolsong village.

He had grown up under the care of his father, a fruit grower. Rumour had it that he had insisted obstinately on letting his father return home when he had entered the mountains after having staged the anti-US struggle. The war broke out. When his native town was liberated and his father came back home, he was very joyous and always with his father, night or day.

At the time of the retreat his father, who had been a guerrilla before the war, had to enter the mountains again. The boy insisted on accompanying him. When a friend of his father told him that he could not go to the mountains because only Party members were permitted to do so, Pyong Gu retorted, "I'm not a Party member, but my father is one. It is nonsense to say that a son of a Party member is not allowed to go to the mountains." And he accompanied his father.

Because the boy was said to be clever and agile, I went to meet him when I got the opportunity to visit the 305th Unit. On getting an information that a man who had entered the mountains from Anui Sub-County was a stooge of the police, the unit commanders were interrogating him. On hearing his confession, Pyong Gu flew into a rage, threatening to shoot him at once. Everybody present there advised the boy not to do so, but he did not listen. When I also advised him to listen to adults, the boy retorted, "It is unthinkable to forgive a stooge of the US imperialists."

In addition, I was told that there was a young company commander on Mount Jiri too, and that he was so talented that veteran commanders were no match for him in operations and building up the logistics of a company. On inquiry, I found out that he was Kang Pyong Gu's elder cousin of 19. His was a revolutionary family, indeed.

One day I visited Santhae-dong, crossing the hill behind Wolsong village where the Kochang County Party Committee was based.As I was coming back along a mountain path a few days later a battle was being fought near Mt. Puk. Stray bullets whistled over the mountain path, too, so I was very cautious. A boy came running towards me amid a hail of bullets.Seeing that he was Pyong Gu, I asked him out of curiosity:

"Aren't you afraid of bullets?"

"Am I a pheasant?"

"Is a pheasant a coward?"

"A pheasant hides in the bushes when it hears shooting. But I don't fear bullets because I'm not a pheasant."

With this, Pyong Gu ran on to the headquarters.

Afterwards I often had occasion to read about his struggles and hero-

ic deeds in the battle reports which were brought to me for coverage.

At the time of the battle at Koje in Kochang County the chairman of the Koje Sub-County Party Committee was in the habit of smoking American cigarettes.The other guerrillas thought nothing of this, but Pyong Gu suspected that he got them from the chief of police in Koje, and if so the secret of that operation may have been already betrayed to the police. Nevertheless, no one listened to the young boy. So, the operation in Koje failed and it turned out belatedly that the chairman of the Koje Sub-County Party Committee was in fact a stooge of the chief of police.

As mentioned above, Pyong Gu harbored a burning hostility toward the enemy, and he was quick-witted too. One day policemen arrested three people in Hamjong village for wearing parts of south Korean army uniforms. The villagers said that they had bought them at a market. Nevertheless, the policemen lined them up and prepared to shoot them. Pyong Gu, who had been watching from afar, fired at the policemen and drove them away. The three people were saved.

During battles he would run fearlessly through showers of bullets to secure communications between units. One day when he came to us with the mission of communication, we offered the delicious meal, but he declined it. When he returned back, we gave him the dried persimmons and taffy we had kept apart, but he refused them saying, "Give them to the other boys, please."

Carrying out his duty with credit and without flinching before the enemy's big offensive launched in the winter of 1952, he was badly wounded in one leg during the Kochang battle and was taken to a field hospital. A turncoat took policemen there, who killed several patients and took the rest, including Pyong Gu, to the Puksang police substation.

The next day the police chief tried to coax the young Pyong Gu to betray the whereabouts of the base of the Hamyang County Party Committee.

Soon the policeman brought Kang Pyong Gu. When he hobbled in, the police chief motioned him to a chair in front of the stove, saying, "It's cold today. Sit near the stove and warm yourself."

Pyong Gu sat and warmed himself as he was told. The police chief kindly invited him to have some cakes.Pyong Gu said, "I have loose bowels, so I'll eat them later." While pretending to shiver with the cold, he stealthily looked around. He caught sight of three hand grenades lying on the police chief's desk.

"You swine, you'll die at my hand," he thought. He sat on calmly, feigning indifferent to the hand grenades. The police chief said, "I'll send you to your mother soon. Don't worry." When the police chief asked

about the instructions of the commander and the base of the Hamyang County Party Committee, he said that he did not know very well because he had kept in the patients' quarters.

Pyong Gu pretended to shiver with cold, having the hand grenades in mind, but the policemen showed no signs of guarding him perhaps because he was so young. The turncoat came in then and patted him on the shoulder, trying to set him at ease. Pyong Gu was seized with burning hatred on seeing the turncoat, but containing himself, said nothing and did not even turn to look at him. When the police chief was addressing the policemen, Pyong Gu snatched up the hand grenades from the desk.Removing safety pins, he shouted: "Hands up, you bastards!"

Taken aback, the police chief and turncoat trembled, holding up their hands. The other policemen pleaded for their lives.

He shouted: "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" and "Long live the country's reunification!" and blew both himself and them up. I was heartbroken at the news of his death, and later wrote a poem in his memory:

Keep his memory fresh
Deep in your hearts
A boy, an unknown bud on Mount Jiri,
Who became part of the soil of the motherland.
He was a young guerrilla,
Who died for the country's reunification.

"Tell My Wife That I Died a Worthy Death."

We sent a man in the direction of Ssari Peak to search for Comrade Song Jung Myong, who was missing. He failed to find Song but came back supporting another comrade who had operated a generator for the wireless squad.

The wounded man had been employed as a farmhand by a landlord in Hamjong village at the foot of Mount Togyu before he joined the guerrillas.

He brought the sad news that all the members of the wireless squad on Ssari Peak had been killed or captured. The captives, 50-60 in all, had been taken to Tongdang village, where the enemy forced them to dig a pit. Thinking that they were digging their own grave, three of them, including himself, made a break for it. The other two were shot dead, but he managed to get away. As night fell he wandered aimlessly until our comrade stumbled upon him.

We decided to move to Chongnae Valley that night, because we had got the news that a few comrades had already set up a base there. The enemy halted the offensive and we had a respite for a while. The provincial Party committee dispatched three men to Ssari Peak to search for stragglers, and the following day the orderly boy came back and reported that Song Jung Myong had been found.

While looking for them in gaps among the rocks in Ssari Peak, they heard someone groaning.Going up to where the groans came from, they found Song Jung Myong lying exhausted on the ground, probably from hunger. To make the matter worse, his feet were frozen. Unable to rise on his feet even though supported by others, orderly boys were not able to carry him on their back. So the boy returned back without delay.

When Song Jung Myong had waded in ankle-deep snow, pursued by enemy troops, his sneakers had been plastered with snow. While he hid in the gap between rocks, his body's warmth had melted the snow on the sneakers and they became wet. But the fall in temperature at night had frozen the sneakers again. This resulted in his feet becoming frostbitten up to the ankles so he could no longer walk.

We sent two more men with an A-shaped carrier to bring him back. Song was semi-conscious due to hunger and the pain of frostbite, but even in this condition he insisted on reporting to the headquarters that another enemy offensive was to be launched again within a few days. He based his opinion on the fact that he had observed the forests and valleys around Janggo Peak leading to Ssari Peak swarming with south Korean troops. Song Jung Myong was a man of few words in everyday life. Also he would not join in debates of others. In society not a few people like to show themselves in relief with speech instead of action, but he was a man of practice prior to speech.

Song thought of the safety of the unit prior to his own pain. Although dizzy from hunger, fatigue and frostbite, he crawled and crawled between the enemies and at last escaped them.

One day he rolled down from a slope and lay unconscious. As he came to himself his feet seldom moved, because his feet placed on a rock were plastered hard frozen with it. Since then on he crawled on the ground and sometimes moved on knees. In this way he advanced one hundred feet an hour inch by inch. Sometimes he lost his consciousness just for a moment and his strength was exhausted out, but he would think more of his comrades than himself.

It was until he met the orderlies that he barely kept his consciousness. However, as soon as he had seen them, he lost his consciousness. When his sneakers were removed, the frostbitten feet were of a dark

colour and the part of skin the shoes had covered peeled off, too. The feet, bare of skin, were reddish, and seemed to cause him untold pain. Nevertheless, he did not give out a groan, teeth set hard and cold sweat broken. We had no medicine with us then, so we let him dip his feet into a wash-basin filled with water and soybeans according to folk medicine. However, how efficacious for the cure of his feet that might be!

The doctor of the medical team declared that they would have to be amputated up to the ankles and that he could not do it without anaesthetic.

However, we had no anaesthetic, and no way of acquiring them in the besieged situation we were in. Well aware of his desperate plight, Song Jung Myong said quietly: "Go ahead and amputate my feet without any anaesthetic, please. I can stand the pain..."

To save his life we performed the operation, with four or five men holding him down. The dreadful sight is still vivid before my eyes. Although it is said that the service in guerrilla army is tough, requiring to risk one's life, I learned from him how to endure and stand up against such hazards harder than death.

Each time I was subjected to all sorts of tortures during my long prison life, his image gave me much help in my struggle to bear the pain.

As Song had predicted, another big enemy offensive started in January 1952. South Korean troops were crawling up to every ridge of the mountains, so we had to evacuate our base, leaving the sick behind. As long as every mountain and every valley was swarmed with the green helmits of the troops, there was no place to move the patient's quarters. Everybody had no alternative but to be ready to fight to the last on his position. We only wished the patient's quarters not to be found by the enemy troops.

But I could not leave without saying goodbye to Song Jung Myong. I gave him a hand grenade with which to kill himself if the enemy discovered the field hospital.

He, however, declined my offer, smiling, and showed me one grenade under his bed. I felt sad to leave him. Still vivid in my memory is my last glimpse of him as he asked me to tell his wife that he had died a worthy death.

Wiping away tears, I climbed Sang Peak. Shots and a grenade explosion were heard from the direction of the field hospital and flames shot up. Thus did we part, Song and I, who had set out on the road of struggle in our early years in Phungsan.

The steep ridges of Mount Jiri were blurred as I looked at them with tearful eyes. Mount Jiri, is also called Mt. Turyu because a branch of Mt.

Paektu had stretched down and abruptly stopped at the southernmost end, with the resultant that the mountains had risen up, having a 32 kilometre-circumference of the Samnam region. Its peaks seem as if shouting about something, standing in the middle of south Korea. What were they shouting about at that time? Perhaps "Never forget the heroic deaths of the genuine sons and daughters of Mount Paektu!"

The Last Battle

When we reached Sang Peak, Ro Yong Ho's unit and Ri Yong Hui's unit had already arrived. Commander Ro Yong Ho from the architecture department of Seoul Technological University was a noted military cadre of the South Kyongsang Provincial Party Committee. Ri Yong Hui, commander of the Kyongnam (South Kyongsang Province) Unit, was originally a member of 14th Regiment in Ryosu and was famous for commanding the unit at the head of the guerrilla army. Both commanders had come at the instructions of the provincial Party committee.

The meeting of the military personnel of the provincial Party committee decided that they should join Ri Hyon Sang's unit, at the insistence of Nam Kyong U, chairman of the provincial Party committee.

"If we fight against a big enemy offensive in scattered units we will be annihilated," he asserted.

Vice-Chairman Ho Tong Uk and other comrades opposed this, saying that it was against the principles of guerrilla warfare and that it might produce a greater danger, but in vain.

That was why several units left for Taesong Valley in order to conduct a joint action with the Ri Hyon Sang's unit. Ri Yong Hui, who was well versed in military affairs and had rich experience in battle, and his comrades thought that they had no alternative, as it was the instruction of their superior, I guess.

Braving the snow the unit climbed down to Taesong Valley through the Sesok tableland. Taesong Valley in Hwagae Sub-County, Hadong County, South Kyongsang Province, is the deepest and widest valley on Mount Jiri.It extends over 16 kilometres from Ssanggye Temple to the Sesok tableland and is unusually wide, with mountain ridges stretching out fanwise. It seemed to me that all the guerrilla units which were struggling against the offensive of the south Korean troops were gathering in this valley.

I was then suffering from fever, so I was limping along with the help of Comrade Jo Yong Rae. He sat me down to give me some medicine,

when loud shots were heard shaking the whole of Taesong Valley. Smoke was rising in all directions. Shells and grenades were exploding, and machine-gun fire could be heard.

It was apparent that our unit was surrounded by the enemy. A bloody hand-to-hand battle ensued, during which not a few of our comrades were killed, including Chairman Nam Kyong U. He strove perseveringly to relieve the besieged unit to the last.

I barely managed to hide myself amid a shower of bullets and shells, between some rocks, with the help of Comrade Jo Yong Rae.

Late that night we ate rice-balls which had been cooked by the supply department. Indeed, they were as sweet as honey. At midnight we climbed a ridge, taking advantage of the darkness. At the end of the ridge we found Ho Kyu Hwal together with Jungsani (a boy guerrilla).

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"The others have crossed the ridge," said Ho. "Follow them quickly."

It seemed to me that he intended to slip away somewhere, using the boy, who was familiar wit the area, as his guide. Ho was a man who frequently made bombastic political speeches. He was fond of advising or criticising other comrades over trivial matters and boasting of his own "faith". It was apparent that as he faced a crisis of life and death he harboured the base thought that he alone would survive. However, there was no time to waste criticising him. The enemy's night firing kept on.

When I had climbed halfway up the ridge leading to Machon I met Comrade Sim Sang Thae who was crawling down, leaving bloodstain on the snow. He shouted, "Don't go any further!"

I rushed to him and clasped him in my arms. He was bleeding badly. He said that, along with vice-chairman Ho Tong Uk, he had climbed up the ridge, unaware of an enemy machine-gun deployed at the top. Ho Tong Uk had ordered him to warn the comrades in the rear. Sim had suffered a fatal stomach wound. He gave me his pistol and told me to leave him, he would soon die anyway.

You can imagine how terribly painful it was for me to take refuge, leaving a dying comrade who had crawled down through the snow, in order to save his comrades.

The following day our party continued to climb up the mountain ridge, Ro Yong Ho's unit in the van and I and other noncombatants in the rear. Towards dawn, south Korean troops started firing again. I felt something strike my knee, and fell down.The ex-chairwoman of the Sinan Sub-County Women's Union Committee of Sanchong County in front of me had her leg broken. My leg bone was not injured, but a bullet had pierced the muscle, exposing the knee joint, and blood ran profusely from the

wound. Comrade Jo Yong Rae bandaged it up with strips of cloth torn from his clothes and hid me among some rocks. I swooned from loss of blood before he went off again. Later I was told that about 50 metres further down Comrade Jo Yong Rae and other noncombatants encountered a party of the enemy and died in the subsequent gunfight.

Jo Yong Rae was a genuine comrade and friend of mine. We shared warm feelings and heart-to-heart talks. He knew Ju Pyong Pho as well as Comrade Kim, and we often talked about them. Jo Yong Rae said that when the war was over he would visit my home in Phungsan County without fail and Ju Pyong Pho's home, too. But he died young and was buried in the frozen soil of Mount Jiri.

What makes me happy is that his friends live in the north now and a relative of his works as a doctor in the State Academy of Sciences in Phyongsong. I intend to take time out to meet them in the near future.

I must have lain for a long time unconscious among the rocks after Jo and his comrades departed. Then suddenly somebody shouted at me: "Don't move!" while poking me in the chest with his rifle. Opening my eyes, I saw a soldier of the south Korean army. That is how I was taken prisoner. I was taken on a stretcher to Kwangju POW Camp via Kurye, Sunchon and Namwon police stations.

Unforgettable Flower Buds of Mount Jiri (2)

After the battle of Taesong Valley in January 1952, the last one I had fought, the guerrillas' tactics had changed. They made surprise attacks on the basis of correct information or appeared in unexpected places to deal blows at the enemy, avoiding such reckless actions as attacking police substations or pillboxes, which might inflict heavy losses on them. It was, of course, only after the lapse of decades that I heard of their struggle. Of those who played leading roles in those days few have survived, and my memory of those days has grown dim. However, I will tell here about unforgettable comrades.

The change of tactics according to a given situation required quick reception of correct information. It is needless to say that many guerrillas struggled in a self-sacrificing way for this purpose. But, of the guerrillas who fought in the Kyongnam Unit after 1952, the few who are still alive are keen to tell of the activities of boys instead of those of themselves or their comrades.

Apparently, the boys' actions in the struggle in the mountains were more impressive for them than those of the grown-ups. They never forget

a boy called Pak Saeng I, as well as Kil Thaek and Pyong Gu.

In the summer of 1952, when battles, big and small, were being fought, the Kyongnam Unit lured a battalion of the south Korean army to Taewonsa Valley and surrounded it, with the result that they took numerous enemy soldiers prisoner. At that time Pak Saeng I was the orderly of the unit commander, and he took a second lieutenant of the south Korean army prisoner in the battle.

The second lieutenant, being pursued by guerrilla besiegers, had no alternative but to hold his hands up at the voice, "Hands up!" someone shouted at the point of rifle to his back. Thus the boy brought the second lieutenant to the base of the unit. The second lieutenant, who was disarmed on arrival at the base, was dumbfounded on seeing the young boy.

The guerrillas disarmed the south Korean prisoners and made them take off their uniforms before sending them back after giving them a political lecture. Wearing these uniforms, the Kyongnam Unit sometimes disguised itself as a platoon of the south Korean army. In the winter of 1952 the enemy's "punitive" operations grew intensive. It happened that over 60 soldiers of the south Korean army, who had camped behind Mount Tok between Sichon and Samjang Sub-Counties for 15 days were all frostbitten, because their commander had prohibited them from building fires in fear of the exposure of their place. To make matters worse, heavy snow hindered supplies, so the soldiers were starving too. The Kyongnam Unit took them prisoner, gave them a meal and escorted them down the mountain.

I also heard of the death of a girl, the educational department head of Sanchong County. When guerrillas were in hunger owing to the enemy's siege, she went down to Munjong village to get food. Then the job of procuring of provisions was very dangerous because anyone who provided guerrillas with food would be shot. Since other guerrillas took refuge at Rojangdae village, she, detouring the village far, crossed the Umchon stream in the vicinity of Sedong village and slipped into Munjong village, barely passing by a sentry.

As she entered the house of an old woman that she had often called on before, the old woman was taken aback, asking, "Why have you come here since troops swarmed around?" The girl told how she had got along until then and about the real situation of guerrillas in starvation. The old woman served the girl with cold boiled rice, saying that she cannot cook rice because fire light may leak out. The enemy troops who were occupying the village would suspect that anyone heating up rice was doing so for the guerrillas. She also gave her some uncooked barley and rice.

Then the old woman urged her to leave there, saying, "Go carefully." The girl and a young man, a member of the Democratic Youth League, who had accompanied her, left the house, worrying about what might happen to the old woman.

However, on the way back she was unfortunately found by a sentry and her leg was injured. The girl was captured by seven or eight soldiers, while the young man just managed to escape. Unwilling to leave her behind, he watched from nearby bushes.

When the soldiers suggested shooting her to death because it is troublesome for them to take her with them, one of them shouted, "Don't kill! This is my victim." With this he was going to take her on his back. The girl desperately kicked him and struggled not to be done. Nevertheless, that rascal was forcibly again going to take her on his back. Sensing his evil ambition to rape her, she struggled desperately to get away from him, beating him on the back with her fists and pulling his hairs. At that moment, scream burst out from his mouth. Because the girl bit deep his neck with her teeth.

"Ah, this little girl bites man. What can I do for this blood?"

This cry was followed by a long shot.

I usually called her "girl, head of education department". I feel sorry that I did not inquire her name.

A Bear's Revenge

Following is a story about a bear. A bear with white markings on its neck disappeared at present, which inhabited Mt. Jiri in those days. Guerrillas often came across with a bear. When the Kyongnam Unit stationed at Chongnae Valley in November 1952, a guerrilla killed one and this event resulted in "killing" a man.

After breakfast all the guerrillas, who had fought battle on previous day, were having a rest excepting for a moving sentry. A loud shot echoed from the sentry-go. Aware of occurrence of emergency, the guerrillas got up and came out, rifle in hand.

The sentry from the south Korean army, who had been taken prisoner and then joined in guerrilla army, reported:

"Ignorant of my shout 'Hands up!', something continued to creep up on me, making a rustle. The moment it changed its direction, I fired."

The guerrillas began to search, wetting their trousers with morning dews and soon found a big bear in thick bamboo bush. Before long the medical section head arrived there,a container in his hand, to catch blood

from the bear. The bear provided the guerrillas with meat, thick layer of fat and gall bladder, much prized in Oriental medicine. The gall of bear was sent to the headquarters.

For the purpose of raising money, the provincial Party committee sold at the reduced price the gall in the South Sea coast area through an underground organization.

Some time later Hwang Song Hyon who had been concerned with the sale turned himself in to the police and informed it against comrades. Thus an old man from Sepho,who had then run a dispensary at Hamyang and had been entrusted with a task to sell the gall bladder, was arrested by the police. Thus the dead bear got his revenge. Later a comrade of mine had seen him at the reformatory office in Jonju, I was told, but I do not hear about him since then.

After release from prison I met some comrades, who said, "That bear was so big and also killed man."

"Then we had been so careless," regretted someone of us. This story illustrates the importance of never letting one's vigilance flag even for a moment. That is why I write this story like an old tale again. When I had been in the south, I had written about it in my notes.

They Struggled for the Motherland to the Last

Entering 1953 the guerrilla forces were driven into more difficult situation. The enemy's punitive operations became more desperate, so the guerrillas had no time enough to cook rice far from resting owing to uninterrupted battles against the enemy troops.

With the signing of the Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953, the enemy turned its full attention to wiping out the guerrillas in south Korea. He was engrossed in demanding that the guerrillas climb down the mountains and turn themselves in to the police.

Nevertheless, the guerrillas did not stop their struggle.

The guerrilla forces were divided into those under the command of Ri Yong Hui and those under the command of Ro Yong Ho. The area of their activities was widened and small units also intensified their activities to disperse the enemy's forces.

Of the battles which took place in those final days of guerrilla activity I only know the details of the battle at Uiryong which took place in November 1953. There are very few survivors of this battle today.

The Ri Yong Hui's unit settled down in Sangbong Valley of the Jiri Mountains in November 1953.His men were divided into four small units

of about a dozen guerrillas each, known by the surnames of their commanders–the "Pak small unit", the "An small unit" and so on.

Commander Ri Yong Hui climbed down the Jiri, leading the Pak small unit, An small unit, chief staff Ri Chun Bong, orderly Pak Saeng I and chief of medical office Yang Ki Chul–less than 30 men in all–leaving two small units behind.

They were all dressed in south Korean army uniforms, which they had captured a few days previously. The guerrillas travelled eastward by night for three days, resting hidden during the daytime. Until then, they did not know their destination at all.

It was only when they arrived at the pass leading to Uiryong County seat that commander Ri explained about districts of their activity and tactics at the meeting of the superiors above the squad-leader level. According to his tactics, the An small unit was to attack the police station, on arrival at the Uiryong County seat; the Pak small unit was to raid the headquarters of the South Korean Youth Corps; if the An small unit blows a five minute-long siren after occupation of police station, the others, recognizing that the seat was liberated, was to let the town people gather at a playground and hold a meeting of congratulating liberation; Yang Ki Chul-led three men team was to requisition medical supplies and another team was to rob the bank.

The guerrillas crawled down from a hill to a road and halted a truck loaded with marketeers, on its way to Uiryong. As soon as the marketeers got down, a military truck appeared, loaded with supply things. The guerrillas commandeered this truck, too, and took a captain of military police prisoner. They forced the captain to sit in the front seat and tell the checkpoint to pass them. So they could go up to the front of the Uiryong police station safely. When they passed a checkpoint, the guard there sent a military salute to them. As soon as the truck pulled up Commander Ri Yong Hui shouted, jumping down from the truck:

"Get down. Rest for five minutes!"

All jumped down.

A policeman was standing, carbine in his hand, on the watchtower in front of the gate of police station. Pak Saeng I disarmed the police station guard as he had been ordered. Simultaneously a few of wounded south Korean soldiers near the gate suddenly rushed at the guard and beat him mercilessly. At that moment a guerrilla void of experience in combat was so astonished at the progress of unexpected state that he fired a shot.As things went this way, Ri Yong Hui changed the tactics immediately. He issued the order to dash. His men rushed into the police station. Since four months passed by after ceasefire, the policemen were relieved,

thinking that the noise was caused by the unruly south Korean soldiers again. The police station was occupied in a moment.

A siren was blown. Local people and marketeers were gathered in a school playground and given a political lecture. In three hours after having captured weapons, medicines and food and so on, the guerrillas withdrew in a truck.The truck pulled up at a valley leading to Mt. Jwagol.

The next prearranged destination was Hapchon, but the plan was changed into returning back to Mt. Jiri because on the following day the large troops of the south Korean army in the front line were mobilized for "punitive" operations. Alarmed at the attack on Uiryong, the enemy began their intensive offensive. So, the guerrillas had to fight fierce battles for a month in order to enter Mt.Jiri. They traversed fields and crossed mountains with no time for cooking meals.There was a bloody battle of life and death, too, decisive of who was the first to seize a low hill. The enemy troops showered shells so that guerrillas could not raise up their heads. Commander Ri Yong Hui took the van of sally this time, too. He dashed in the shower of shells, firing M-1 rifle, and occupied the height. The guerrillas fought for two hours, firing and rolling down rocks on enemy troops, and was able to beat them off.

As darkness fell down a reconnoitering party went to a village. They captured a south Korean soldier carrying lunch with him and found out the password of that night from him. They safely escaped the enemy's siege net, using the password and finally reached the Kumho River. Mt. Jiri was across the river. The guerrillas went up along the river, searching for shallows. At the upper reach the river was divided into streams and stepping stones were laid at the juncture of two streams. As the van of the guerrillas began to cross the stream, the south Korean troops were seen to come to them in one file from the opposite side on the stepping stones.

While our covering party fired at the enemy, the other guerrillas climbed up a mountain ridge hastily. Looking down from the top of mountain, they found numerous spots of fire in the opposite of the river. On top of it, from the direction which they had marched in for all hours of evening the enemy trucks ran up,with headlights on, and on having stopped, they put off headlights, so we could not estimate how many trucks arrived there. The remark "To have the world against one" fitted this situation. It was apparent that the guerrillas were fear-stricken.

With his shout "Follow me!" Commander Ri Yong Hui advanced forward.The unit entered a valley across the field it had traversed a little before. However, after short time they heard a sentry shouting, "Who are you?" Commander Ri came back in haste and motioned his men to

escape the enemy before saying the password for the previous day. No sooner had it been wrong than the sentry shouted again, "Who are you?" as if puzzled and then fired at him. Ri fell down.

In the meantime the guerrillas slipped away back to the valley and discussed about a route all day long. It was settled that the An small unit and Pak small unit should act separately in order that in the circumstances in which all the guerrillas were in danger even some of them should survive and go into Mt. Jiri. It was also decided that the An small unit enter Mt.Jiri, commanded by chief staff Ri Chun Bong,while the Pak small unit tour around vicinities to lure the enemy troops. In accordance with the decision the Pak small unit moved around, luring the enemies for a month and only eight guerrillas went into Mt. Jiri; the An small unit lay in ambush in bamboo field to watch for a chance to get out of the enemy's siege and at an encounter with a "punitive" force even the last man died a heroic death.

Doctor Yang Ki Chul also died in this battle, a man who had saved many patients...

From time immemorial Mount Jiri as well as Mount Paektu have been sites of patriotic struggles to repel foreign invaders, battlefields full of the chivalrous spirit of the people resisting successive reactionary rulers. Mount Jiri was such at the time of Hideyoshi's invasion in 1592 and also at the time of the struggle of loyal troops against the Japanese in 1907. Ko Kwang Sun, An Kye Hong and Sim Nam Il, commanders of the Righteous Army, fought there; in the days of occupation by the Japanese imperialists, too, every nook and every part of the Jiri, Togyu,Kaya and Phaegwan Mountains was dyed with the blood of patriotic fighters. How can they insult the fallen in the battles of Taesong Valley, Nogo terrace, Sesok Tableland and Phia Valley by saying that their blood shed for the sacred cause of the country's reunification was wasted, and that they were useless victims "run over by the wheel of history"?

Most of the comrades who were released from Chongju prison with me during 1988-89 were men who had served terms of 30 to 40 years in prison, taken prisoner in guerrilla action. I never heard any of them say that they themselves had been run over by the wheel of history. Reading several books dealing with the guerrilla forces after release from prison when I lived in south Korea, I thought it really fortunate to have survived after serving a term of 34 years, because I was able to speak the truth about those days.

The history of the guerrilla forces on Mount Jiri woven with unprecedentedly fierce battles and stories about tens of thousands of victims is also a history of the blood of patriots,loyal to the country.

Still now the images of many comrades of mine who struggled on Mount Jiri appear in my mind's eye.

At present the south Korean rulers have built a lot of gay quarters at the sacred battle sites where my comrades are buried and hold carousals. However, the blood of my comrades which has soaked into this land remains alive in the soul of the nation and in their last cries of "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" and "Long live my reunified and independent country!"

The stories about them will be told and must be told until the day when their shouts echo freely over the reunified 3,000-*ri* (1,200 km) land. (3,000-*ri* is the length of the Korean peninsula.)

6. "SEND ME TO KOJE ISLAND"

Sentenced to Seven Years' Penal Servitude

In January 1952 I was taken prisoner in Taesong Vally and carried on a stretcher by the puppet army. After passing three months in Kwangju POW Camp I was moved to the jail of the South Jolla Provincial Police Bureau. Although my wound had not healed completely, I was taken to the public presecutor's office and interrogated.

As for my feelings, I was seized with indignation and unnameable complicated sad feelings rather than unrest and worries about my situation.

Sitting opposite the public prosecutor with a table between him and me and looking at his face, I recalled the interrogation I had undergone in the Phungsan Police Station 20 years before on account of the "Red Reading Society" case. Then I was interrogated by a Japanese public prosecutor and now by a Korean one, a fellow countryman, from whose lips the designation "Red" dropped incessantly.

When I was 16 years old the designation "Red" sounded nice to me and I felt somewhat proud, but this time I could hardly repress my anger. Hearing the word still in my own country after the Japanese had been driven out and from my fellow countryman's lips, too, I had an illusion that the time before liberation had come back. The face of the Korean prosecutor shouting in front of me looked like the face of the Japanese one.

The feeling of solitude after I was separated from my comrades on the mountain, and the tragic reality of my fate greatly oppressed me. In the meantime, Ko Jin Hui from the guerrilla force on Mount Halla was captured and brought in. At the time on Mt. Paegun preparations were being made for a battle to rescue the detainees in Kwangju POW Camp, and Comrade Ko had come to Kwangju from Mt. Paegun on a scouting mission for this operation when she was caught.

She had gone to Pyongyang with her husband Kang Kyu Chan in the capacity of a delegate to the First Supreme People's Assembly elected by the constituency of Jeju Island in August 1948. When the war broke out, she, a good comrade, followed her husband, though she was a fragile woman, from the ardent desire to liberate her native Jeju Island.

She was not discouraged by the loss of her husband in the battle on Mount Togyu, and volunteered for the difficult scouting mission.

With the capture of Comrade Ko Jin Hui the plan to attack Kwangju POW Camp was aborted, but we were greatly encouraged by the thought that our comrades on the mountain had not forgotten us and were making great efforts to rescue us.

A few days later we heard the sad news that Comrade Ko, who did not yield to the cruel torture of the interrogators, had killed herself at night. Comrades in the next cell heard her shouting, "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" and "Long live the Democratic People's Republic of Korea!" We wept, grieving over the loss of such a heroine.

She chose death to keep the secrets of the guerrillas, but we had no such courage and were maintaining our existence, undergoing severe sufferings like this....

She died, but she won by death.

I gained great strength by her death. It was my thought that even in prison the struggle was continuing, that there cannot be even a temporary disappointment in the fight against injustice, and that we must fight the enemy by all possible means however hard our situation may be. During three months' confinement in Kwangju POW Camp I proved that I was a regular People's Army man and fought the authorities twice, demanding that they send me to Koje Island. But when I began to shout "Koje Island..." in the prison cell, the jailers dragged me out mercilessly and beat me nearly to death. For them we were those who deserved to be killed but were still alive. However, I decided to fight to the end and repeatedly requested that the authorities send me to Koje Island.

Around that time a heated debate was being held concerning the repatriation of prisoners of war at the ceasefire talks which were going on. The northern side insisted on an "unconditional repatriation according to the Geneva Convention", while the US side put forward a claim for "voluntary repatriation".

At the same time the United States was waging an "anticommunism" campaign in the POW camps. Particularly, they launched psychological warfare in the Koje POW Camp to "convert" the "Red prisoners of war" into "anticommunist prisoners of war". Notwithstanding, I insisted that I should be repatriated to the north at the time of repatriation of prisoners of war because I was a regular People's Army man.

Thus, I could not go to Koje Island but stood trial. The reader may think I did so to return to the north where my wife and children were as soon as possible, taking advantage of the ceasefire agreement and the issue of the repatriation of prisoners of war. If that had come true, how

nice it would have been! But I knew that it was impossible considering the mentality of the authorities and interrogators I faced. I was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for the "hostile acts" I had committed as a guerrilla, allowance being made for me being a noncombatant war correspondent. This was a rare occurrence in those days. The voice of the judge passing death sentences sounded so familiar to us that the imposition of a heavy sentence was a matter of little concern in those days. So, seven years' imprisonment can be said to be a lucky one. But then we thought that there was little difference between sentence to seven years' imprisonment and a death sentence. Waking up in the morning, we would see corpses being carried out. Death was a common occurrence everywhere.

The POW camp authorities took the criminals under sentence of death to Mount Mudung or to the bank of the Kwangju stream and executed them there. Sometimes they executed them against the wall of the POW camp in the presence of all the prisoners of war to intimidate us.

But they were frustrated in their designs.

"Long live General Kim Il Sung!"

"Long live the Democratic People's Republic of Korea!"

These shouts our comrades gave in the face of death stirred up fiercer flames of faith and will in our breasts. Those comrades who died before us rather encouraged us with their stout attitudes, smiles and ardent shouts. They awakened us to the fact that not the issue of life and death but faith is important in life and that life and death are necessary for faith.

On July 27, 1953 the Armistice Agreement was signed at Panmunjom. Murderous suppression reigned in the prison, but we made desperate efforts to get every scrap of news and shared it with comrades.

After the Armistice Agreement preliminary talks began on October 26 at Panmunjom concerning the holding of a political conference within three months to attain a durable peace. At that time we all believed that after the political conference all political prisoners would be sent back to the north.

The jailers, too, doubtlessly believed that way, although there were differences from prison to prison. In those days in Taegu prison, for instance, political offenders were unexpectedly taken out of their cells and allowed to bask in the sun for 5-6 hours a day. Until then they had been allowed only 70 minutes for exercise a day, so all of them looked as pale as paper. The prison authorities feared that this might cause a trouble in case of their repatriation.

While a peaceful life was beginning in the outer world with the end of

the ravages of war, murder was going on in the prisons. In particular, the Kwangju POW Camp authorities committed atrocious cruelties in anticipation of repatriation of the prisoners of war. They gathered over 200 men sentenced to death and hurriedly executed them. I heard that about ten prisoners were shot to death twice or thrice every month beginning in October 1953, and only six survived from among 200 prisoners until the Geneva Political Conference was held in April 1954. The authorities feared that "the prisoners who deserved death might be sent back alive on account of the political conference."

Imagine how the detained comrades felt when the jailer, standing in front of the door of the cell with a list of names in hand, called out those who were to be executed that day.

I heard that such a murderous frenzy reigned in the Koje POW Camp too, where I had demanded to be sent. To my surprise, recently I read in the newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* that at that time the US army tested germ weapons on the prisoners of war in the Koje POW Camp and killed a lot of them. If at that time my request had been fulfiled and I had been sent there, I might have been subjected to germ warfare testing too.

One of the six comrades who survived the Kwangju POW Camp, after release on the expiration of his prison term, was taken to Chongju Protective Custody House where I was and was set free in 1989.

Jailers from the Japanese Kwantung Army

Having been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, I was transferred to Kwangju prison and then Taejon prison and then was transferred to the military prison at Tongchon of Taegu. This prison had formerly been a large house with an orchard and had been owned by a Japanese. The cellar for the storage of apples had been turned into a "special cell" for political offenders and felons.

I was held in the "special cell", along with about 50 others. There we were beaten from morning till night. Many of the prison guards had served in the Japanese Kwantung Army. Those who had arrested and killed independence champions during Japanese imperialist rule were imprisoning and guarding our comrades in the liberated country. That was the reality of south Korea.

Syngman Rhee pretended to be an anti-Japanese champion, but he formed the pillars of the army, judicature and police with those who had served in the Kwantung Army and policemen who had worked for the Japanese.

During Japanese imperialist rule 8,000 policemen from among 20,000 under the Government-General were Koreans and 5,000 from among them were serving under Syngman Rhee's "government", although in different uniforms. This showed the real nature of the then south Korean "government". For instance, Kim Chang Ryong, who was close to Syngman Rhee and head of the Army Counterintelligence Corps in those days had been the agent of the military police who had arrested and killed anti-Japanese fighters and patriots in North Manchuria during Japanese imperialist rule. The jailers, therefore, boastfully displayed the cruelty they had learned in the Kwantung Army, instead of feeling ashamed of serving it. Therefore, discipline in the special cell was more severe than in the barracks.

Prisoners did not dare to look the jailers in the face. When a jailer called the number of any prisoner, he, though hungry and mortally sick, had to jump to his feet and stand at attention uttering a vigorous "Yes" like a Japanese soldier. The most ferocious of the felons was chosen as the chief of the cell, a sort of deputy prison guard. Of course, the cell chief acted on the instructions of the prison guard, but he usually went beyond the instructions as he was cruel by nature. The cell chief made us sit in rows and appointed a head for each row. The row heads were also ferocious felons. When an inmate wanted to scratch an itchy place, he had to get the permission of the row head. If one acted as one likes, one would be called out and given a sound beating. The detainees had to sit still all day long. They did not even dare to lean against the wall.

The cell was small, so sleeping presented a big problem. We had to lie on our sides, heads alternating with each other's legs. If someone lying on the left side wanted to turn over and lie on his right side, feeling a pain in his left side, he could not budge and could barely turn over only when all the other inmates got up and lay down again.

Even the prison I was held in at the time of Japanese imperialist rule was not as bad as that. Someone said in joke, characterizing the prisons of the time of Japanese imperialist rule with "local colours", "Sinuiju prison is a bare-handed convict prison, Kyongsong prison is a labour prison, Taejon prison is a cudgel prison, Taegu prison is a struggle prison, Hamhung prison is a son-of-bitch prison, Chongjin prison is a fresh fish prison, Haeju prison is a stable prison and Sodaemun prison is a cellar prison." But I do not know how to characterize the prisons in south Korea... They have many characteristics including utter cruelty and all of them may be graded as top grade. At the sight of them even those who are apt at figuration would be struck dumb.

For meals, we were served a ball of boiled rice as small as a child's

fist, and swallowed it at one gulp. Even the doctor at the prison hospital said that this diet was not enough to live on three months. Indeed, all of us were reduced to skeletons within three months. Every morning one or two dead bodies were carried out.

Someone proposed that groups of seven or eight men be organized and in turns give to one of them half of their rice balls at each mealtime. Then each would have a full stomach at one mealtime, although he would feel hungry at six mealtimes. We did this avoiding the row head's eyes, but to eat one's fill at one mealtime and go hungry for three days was not a thing to be done.

Now and then some inmates would receive food sent in by their families. However, part of it would be taken away by the jailers. Then only after the shares of the cell chief and the row head were taken out, was a small piece of food given to the prisoner in question. But he was not allowed to share it with other inmates.

If an inmate died the cell chief did not immediately report it to his superior in order to get extra meals. The dead body was usually left in a corner of the cell for two or three days, and the excuse was made that he was ill

We passed two years in such sufferings.

To summarize, the jailers came from the Kwantung Army, so their handling of prisoners was extremely cruel and wicked. South Korea should be considered to be at the highest stage in terms of prison equipment and rules.

The south Korean authorities allowed the jailers full play to their brutality against the political offenders whom they could not find execuses to kill. They provided utterly inhuman prison equipment, rules, sleep and food conditions.

When I think of it now, it seems like a dream how I survived such conditions. After Taegu prison I was transferred to Mapho prison in Seoul in 1954.

Eating a Boiled Rat

For some time after my arrival at Mapho prison I shared a cell with people whom I did not know and who were in a state similiar to mine. Sometimes I was taken to a printshop to work, where I met some acquaintances.

There was little difference between my cell in Mapho prison and the special cell in Taegu prison. The jailers planted their agents in each cell,

so the prisoners could not speak freely with each other. Even when they met their acquaintances going to work at a factory, they did not dare even to wink at them. When they went to a factory to work they received somewhat bigger balls of boiled rice but were allotted enormous daily work quotas. If they failed to finish the allotted work, they were given a flogging. Old prisoners who were not accustomed to rough work and failed to fulfil their assignments were beaten and fell ill.

One day the section chief of the prison summoned me. He said that "Reds" could not be tolerated. His intention seemed to be to sound me out through my reaction. Feigning indifference at such a time would mitigate the hardships of life in prison. But when he went so far as to say that "The north and south cannot be united no more than oil and water," I could not endure it any more and retorted, "Suppose an American appears here and beats me in front of you. You would feel unpleasant though you could not say anything, wouldn't you?"

"Maybe."

"Don't you feel unpleasant because you are of the same nation?"

"Right."

"It proves that the north and south constitutes one whole, I think. Then, how dare you liken the north and south of the same nation to water and oil?"

"Dear me! This man will not do. Look here! Send him to ward No. 5."

Thereupon, I was put in solitary confinement. So I was in ward No. 5 in Mapho prison. It was a special ward where the "worst" political offenders were kept. From then I was not taken to the factory any more and my rice ball ration was reduced.

My cell was so narrow that I could stretch out my hands and touch the walls on both sides. It had no toilet but only a bedpan in a corner. In the back wall there was a tiny window covered with a thick wire grille. They must have thought it insufficient. In addition, this screen was covered with boards nailed to it from outside. Because of this not even a ray of sunlight could be seen.

It was winter, and since I came from the north I had no family to send underwear to me. Nor did I know any other inmates who could lend me underwear. Later I heard that prisoners with families in contact with them were separated from those without family contacts. So, the prisoners with no family are said to have suffered hardships likewise. They may have had a harder time than I, I suppose.

I sat on the floor in a prisoner's blue uniform. I was without muffler and the cold penetrated my body so that I felt as if I would be frozen to death. I felt my back very cold and I was assaulted by the thought that if I

lean against the folded quilts in one corner of the cell I would feel rather better. But I could not do so because inmates were ordered to sit upright in the middle of the cells.

I then thought of a trick. I began to save my drinking water little by little and wet one side of the folded quilt. One or two days later the wet side of the quilt froze. I pointed out to the guard that the quilt was frozen, and he told me to place it in the middle of the cell. Leaning against the quilt in the middle of the cell, I felt warmer.

One day I received the usual cooked rice and soup for lunch. The soup was made of uncleaned radish leaves which had been left in the fields during the radish harvesting season. The soup tasted bitter and looked dark, like herbal medicine. The soup bowls, which were made out of American bomb shells, got very rusty and were so ill-shaped that the mere sight of them nauseated one. Seasoning, apart from a little bit of salt, was not be thought of. We were so hungry that it pleased us to find any solid stuff in it. At lunchtime that day I felt that the radish leaves were rather heavy. At the moment of bringing them to my mouth I found that there was a boiled rat in the soup.

I was particularly afraid of rats so I was dubbed a "rat-phobe". I got the nickname toward the end of the 1930s when I was in Tokyo. One day I came back from a certain place together with friends. I entered the room first. The moment I opened the door, a rat which was perhaps frightened dropped down from a shelf. Accidently it came down just on my head. I was so frightened that I fell down on the floor with a shriek and was dazed. At this female office workers of Hitachi Factory flocked there from every room. From then on they teased me, calling me a "rat-phobe". Hence my nickname.

So you may imagine how hungry I was when I actually ate the boiled rat. I was prompted by the thought that I must survive by all means, as they wanted to beat, freeze and starve me to death. The desire for survival was associated with the spirit of resistance, hatred and indignation.

One morning when breakfast was served I looked into the soup bowl absent-mindedly. I saw my face reflected in the soup. It looked like the illustration of a skull in a medical encyclopedia. It could not be called a human face. I wanted to make sure that I was alive. I composed a poem, prompted by the feeling I had then. I cite it here.

The light of past youth which was so beautiful
Could not be seen
In the deep-set eyes.
The burning ardor of youth

Could not be seen
In the rough wrinkles of the cheek
Under the protruding cheekbones.
Youth was gone.

But you did not pass youth in vain.
You devoted it to the struggle
For the motherland and nation.
The motherland, therefore, will hold
You, your emaciated body,
In its broad embrace.
Your genuine love
Will bring warm lips
To your wrinkled face.

It will bring joy and honour
Because youth was not passed in vain
Continue to fight for the motherland
Till the last drop of oil dries in your joints
Till your skin covers the bones uglier than skeletons.
Till your heart beats its last.

Let the bosom of the motherland
Embracing you
Be broader.
Let the lips of love
Shown to you
Be warmer.

Looking at my gaunt face reflected in the salty soup, I thought about who had made me what I was.

I felt sad about the divided motherland and anger at those who had caused it to be divided. I wondered whether my comrades and my dear wife and daughter would recognize my gaunt face. But I was convinced that if I lived somewhere in south Korea, laughing with a fat face and not with the haggard face reflected in the soup, my comrades and my dear ones would no more recognize me as a comrade, father or husband.

... Continue to fight for the motherland
Till your heart beats its last.

Prison, the True Face of the Authorities

Prison is often considered to be a place separated from the outer world by high fences, iron bars and concrete walls. In this way the authorities aims to stifle all thinking and activities of political offenders by closing their ears and eyes.

However, through experience I came to think that no place is more sensitive to the changes in the outer world and mentality of the authorities than prison. In this sense, it is no exaggeration to say that prison is the true face of the authorities.

It is a considerable distance from the Mapho prison to the Capitol Building in Seoul. Squatting in the prison cell, I at times imagined the changes in the face of aged Syngman Rhee in his presidential office.

In 1956 a presidential election was held. I heard from comrades who had returned from work in the printing works that they had printed ballots all through the night for about 20 days before the election.

Syngman Rhee, who had pledged, in tears, that he would not run for the Presidency a third time, went back on his word. He uttered from his own lips that he again ran for the election "for the nation," following the desire of the crowd of demonstrators who clamoured for his continued presidency in front of the guardhouse, but his ulterior design is known even to a mere child.

It was evident that Syngman Rhee much fretted, running for the election stifling the anti-dictatorship trend in such a clumsy manner. Talking with the comrades who printed ballots in the printing house in Mapho prison, I suspected that the ballots were printed in secret for a rigged election. He said, "As the matter came in plenty, I thought at first that it was printed in the prison because it required secret printing, but study of the jailers' faces showed that it was not that. They fretted, making all the papers printed by operating machines day and night for about 20 days. Then they pressed us to take off set types, do away with reprint and not to let printing of ballots be known."

At any rate, in this election Syngman Rhee obtained only 52 percent of the votes in spite of such a rigged election. Jo Pong Am also ran for the election as the candidate of the Progressive Party who was the first to clamour for the country's peaceful reunification under Syngman Rhee's police dictatorial rule under which anyone who only mentioned "reunification" would be beaten with an iron club. Under unfavourable conditions he got nearly as many votes as Syngman Rhee, thus making him shudder.

There was another surprise for Syngman Rhee. He had breathed the breath of relief at the candidate of the Democratic Party Sin Ik Hui being assasinated before the election. It is easy to imagine what was Syngman Rhee's countenance when he heard the news that votes were cast for the late Sin across south Korea.

In January 1958, Syngman Rhee made National Police Director So Jong Hak hold the command himself and raid the headquarters of the Progressive Party and arrest Jo Pong Am and other central figures. In spite of the raging public opinion he executed his rival candidate Jo Pong Am on tramped-up spying charges.

I wonder whether Syngman Rhee thought that he safely laid foundation stones for his life Presidency. But indignation, which grew silently in the hearts of the people, finally drove Rhee out.

Let me study the face of the authorities from a different angle.

The story of Ri Yong Gi, head of the Taejon prison, cannot be omitted in the history of prisons for political offenders in the 1950s. I was in Mapho prison when he was bent on converting political offenders. Later I learned from the testimony of several comrades what happened in Taejon prison.

Originally the tactic of ideological conversion was instituted by the Japanese imperialists who were preparing to ignite the Sino-Japanese war. This institution, which gave sufferings to anti-Japanese independence champions in colonial Korea, disappeared temporarily with national liberation in 1945 and revived in 1948, giving rise to the "associated press case" which caused the deaths of a large number of former Leftist activists. In 1956 in each prison across the country there was instituted the procedure of ideological conversion for political offenders, the gist of which was the "establishment of the view on the state".

But I heard that the fascist prison head Ri Yong Gi had started it already in 1955. His ultimatum-like radio address signalled the start of his conversion policy. He addressed the inmates of special ward No. 4 of Taejon prison as follows: "You have two choices—either convert or be carried out through the back door" (When a prison inmate died his body was carried out through the back door). Then he took away all the underwear from the political prisoners in ward No. 4, which even the guards likened to Siberia. He prohibited their family members from sending them anything and enforced a "starvation policy", the basic conversion policy. At mealtimes the inmates were served with four spoonfuls of cooked rice and thin soup. And even that was only seven-tenths of the normal ration. The rest of the rice and soup were thrown away before the eyes of the hungry prisoners.

This was not all. The sound of beating prisoners was heard from the corridor of the special ward all day long. The prisoners were subjected for three hours to cruel torture by which their hands were handcuffed with one arm thrown over the shoulder. They sweated as if they had come out of a hot bath.

In a word, they were forced to choose between death from hunger and survival by conversion. This starvation policy continued till the April 19 Popular Uprising.

It is wrong to think that our comrades who were undergoing cruel sufferings in the prison at the crossroads of life and death were overcome with fear.

We saw the situation of colonial south Korea and the dark face of the authorities through the gruesome atmosphere in the prison and the cruel behaviour of Ri Yong Gi and his like. We felt the death throes of Syngman Rhee's government just before its collapse.

When I came back to my cell after braving their attempts at forced conversion and torture I often felt a sense of security settling in my mind, though I felt indescribable pains in my body.

When the April 19, 1960 Popular Uprising swept south Korea we took it as an inevitable outcome. It was not surprising that Syngman Rhee's bronze statue tumbled down on the pavement and he had to flee to the United States in a special plane provided by the United States.

Chief Warder Ri Yong Gi, too, was later thrown into Sodaemun prison in Seoul for his evil doings. However, he was imprisoned for only a short time. I heard that after the May 16 military coup by Park Jung Hee he was released and he ran a tea shop on Jongro Street.

One early morning, when I could not sleep, shivering from the cold in the solitary cell of ward No. 5 in Mapho prison, I heard the footsteps of the jailer approaching. Soon my door was thrown open. I jumped to my feet. I found the guard standing in front of me. "You are to be transferred to Pusan prison." he said, "Pack your things and come out quickly!"

I had nothing to pack, because I had no family. I went out empty-handed and found that there were quite a few prisoners to be transferred. All of them came out, holding a bundle. I was the only one who was bare-handed. The prison guard dubiously stared me in the face.

We were tied tight with ropes and handcuffed, and then taken to Seoul Station in a lorry. While we waited for a train we were closely surrounded by dozens of policemen armed with rifles. We were not allowed to talk to each other. When we attempted to look around, we were shouted at. I wondered why they behaved so roughly, for we were as good as living corpses which could do nothing. In additon, the prison guards

shouted at us more fiercely than usual as if they wanted to show off in front of the policemen. Some 40-50 policemen surrounded us at every railway station on the way. Nevertheless, I stealthily looked out of the train window. It really seemed a different world outside.

We arrived at Pusan at night, and were taken to Pusan prison in a lorry. We were placed in solitary cells. I was placed in cell No. 10 of ward No. 3. The quilt in my cell was bloodstained, but I covered myself in it anyway because of the cold. Later I learned that the ward had been exclusively designed for lepers. Receiving the news that we were arriving, the prison authorities had moved the lepers to another ward and put us in it.

7. WEATHERING RAGING STORMS

"I Came Out Of the Prison Gate"

On January 27, 1959 I was released. But my mind was oppressed with the thought of comrades who had died in the struggle for freedom under Japanese imperialist rule and of the comrades who had remained active in the south and arresred and had been murdered. Many of them had gone to the north.

The number of political offenders who were thrown into the POW camps and prisons after the ceasefire is said to have amounted to tens of thousands.

The survival rate of political prisoners during and after the war was said to be one out of 200 or 300.

Because I had no clothes to change into upon release, the prison authorities gave me a blue prisoner's suit which had been dyed black. Looking like a beggar, I trudged the unfamiliar Pusan streets, and, asking directions, managed to get to the "Legal Protection Society", which accommodated ex-convicts such as robber, thieves and swindlers who had no place to go and, of course patriots like myself.

I was ready to bear sufferings due to police surveillance, but I found it really difficult to live together with these people of ill behaviour.

They often informed against me to the officials of the "Legal Protection Society" and the police, intending perhaps to show themselves off to advantage before them, and that, adding colour in a way to attract the attention of the police. It was unendurable that although they committed all kinds of evil deeds, they found fault with me, excusing themselves for their deeds, saying "I'm, nevertheless, patriot more than you the Red". I had to restrain myself constantly not to be dragged into their challenge.

I continuously repeated myself.

"Who is a patriot? I myself never claimed that I'm a patriot. I only strove to be a patriot. Friends, don't bring shame to the motherland any more." I inwardly repeated these words continuously.

The "Legal Protection Society", too, gave me a wide berth. It found jobs for robbers and gangsters and left them alone, even if they drank

with the money they got and caused trouble, but they did not help me to get a job.

Although I had been released from prison, I felt as if I had been put into another prison. In the real prison reliable comrades were beside me and served as mental support for me, but here there were only roughnecks and I felt more lonely without that mental support than in prison.

I took a job that no one else wanted in a briquette factory. I worked from dawn to nine o'clock in the evening, and received 400 *hwan* a day.

I did not drink alcoholic beverages, and sparingly smoked the cheapest cigarettes called "Parangsae" (Blue Bird) and saved as much as I could from my meague earnings.

I intended to leave the "Legal Protection Society" as far as possible and get a dwelling place outside.

One day on my way to work I met an acquaintance from Phungsan.

I was passing by him thinking that I would hardly meet my acquaintance on the street of Pusan when he suddenly called my name.

He was very glad to meet me. One is said to be pleased to see even a crow of the native place in a place away from home. He must have been in such a state of mind.

After telling him what had happened to me, I bade him a hasty farewell. For several days after that the view of my native place Phungsan appeared before my mind's eyes and I became gloomy. I wonder whether it was because I unexpectedly met my fellow countryman. When I saw clouds scurrying across the sky or migratory birds, I could not help but miss native village and feel my eyes moistened.

I wonder whether my mother and wife are well. Hyon Ok, who is over ten years old now, must go to school shouldering her schoolbag. I more missed my comrades who ran about buoyant to build a new motherland after liberation. They now must be busy removing ravages of war and building a new country. I felt gloomy about the fact that I was making briquettes in south Korea, with my face smeared black. My yearning for them was associated with some sort of despair and envy.

But it was not long afterwards that he called on me at the "Legal Protection Society".

When he told other people my story, they wanted to see me and arranged a party for me.

I was grateful, but I was worried inwardly. I asked:

"I'm now under surveillance. If you treat me this way will it not do harm to you?"

"You may not worry about that."

Theirs was confident voice.

Judging by their story, most of them seemed to be influential in business in Pusan. Some ran several buses and could be said to be rich in those days and were acquainted with directors of institutions.

They said that they want to form a society to help me, sympathizing with my situation.

Thus I took employment in the propaganda in the Yongdo Theatre in Pusan with their surety. My business was to make movie advertisement, bills and signboard and the like.

On taking the job I learned that the theatre earned much money in those days. I wonder whether the desolate society after the war made people swarm to the theatre.

Much money was in circulation there, so there were a great deal of swindlings going on in advertisement. The officials left over expenses by all means and lined their own pockets. I did my best to work honestly. The director of the company knew my past career and the words must not go round that he helped the "Red" take a job and the "Red" embezzled the money of the company. With the passage of time the director of the company seemed to realize this point. Later he called me and said to me, "I will promote you to be head of advertisement. I hope you will work hard." Becoming head of advertisement, I came to earn more money. As I could not continue to earn a livelihood in the theatre, I accumulated the earned money assiduously.

I greeted April 19 Uprising with excitement in the spring of 1960.

Back in Jail

The April 19, 1960 Uprising broke out first in Masan and Pusan in protest against the rigged election which returned Syngman Rhee to power. The students and demonstrators who went out to the streets stubbornly fought the policemen who shot the tear shells, throwing stones against them. The demonstrators raided police stations and substations and the puppet government offices and swarmed to the municipal building.

The murder of the young demonstrator Kim Ju Ryol by the police revived the reunification movement which had been frozen in the fantasy of "crushing communism" and "marching north", with strong force. I was moved by the sight of students marching in the streets carrying placards reading, "Let's go to the north! Come to the south!".

The students trooped into our cinema and asked for writing brushes and paint to write placards and posters. I joined them in writing slogans.

Syngman Rhee's "government" was none other than a puppet government which festered and became as corrupt as can be. In addition to the old-style colonial dictatorship, the economy was shackled by the feudal ownership system, and both town and countryside were utterly devastated. The south Korean people hovered on the brink of starvation.

Syngman Rhee, who claimed to be the "father of the nation", was nothing but a puppet of the United States.

When the demonstrators pulled down his bronze statue, he was astonished and said "Why do they behave that way?"

He who once advocated the love of the country and nation at the top of his voice left his will which said, "All my property shall be transferred to my wife Franchesca forever," when he breathed his last in the secluded Island Hawaii. This shows well his inborn physiology.

The present south Korean "government" has the same physiology as the one before April 19, 1960. After Syngman Rhee's "government" was overthrown the cry for reunification – "Let's go to the north! Come to the south! Let's meet in Panmunjom!" – broke out all across south Korea.

But at dawn on May 16, 1961 Park Jung Hee mutinied, crossed the bridge over the River Han and seized power, proclaiming the setting up of the "Supreme Council for National Reconstruction."

Article One of a declaration of the Council, consisting of six articles, states, "Upholding anticommunism as our foremost national policy, we will revitalize our anticommunist stand which had heretofore been formal empty words."

I could not help but think of what sort of people the "foremost national policy" was designed for and what the "revitalization" meant. In fact, it meant an impending whirlwind of fascism and another roundup of political offenders.

One June day in 1961 an old friend of mine unexpectedly called on me. He begged me to lend him two million *hwan* saying that he could not explain why he needed it. So I lent him all the money I had, not asking any questions because he was an honest man. Then I had about 1.5 million *hwan* which was a fairly large sum in those days. (10 *hwan* was changed to 1 *won* by currency reform on the 10th of June 1962.)

A few days later I was taken to the "Legal Protection Society" and charged with having contributed money to an underground political organization. The basic reason for my arrest was that the Park Jung Hee regime was cracking down on all people who harboured longings for national reconciliation. They would have thought up some other excuse to arrest me if I had not lent the money.

The prison atmosphere was said to have become much milder for

about one year after April 19, perhaps because of the aftereffects of the April 19 Uprising. The prison term for political offenders not labeled as spies was reduced by one fifth. In addition, the attitude of the prison officers toward political offenders changed and they said, "You may be set free on a retrial. Petition for it." In fact some of the comrades who went out to work in factories were released after retrial, and some were released for health reasons.

But with the May 16 coup the prison atmosphere was completely reversed – because the prison atmosphere reflected the political atmosphere. Armed sentries from the army were placed at strategic points in the prison, and those who had been released were thrown back in jail.

I was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment after a perfunctory trial on the charge of offering money to an underground party organization. Its absurdity made me laugh before I was seized by the feeling of mortification for being sentenced to 15 years' penal servitude for nothing while I had been sentenced only to seven years' imprisonment after being captured on the battlefield.

At that time I was 46 years old and it meant that I was to stay behind bars until I reached 60 years of age.

Park Jung Hee must have hastily taken such a violent measure making "anticommunism" the foremost national policy with a view to obtaining the support of the United States. All the consecutive flunkeyists curried favor with the United States by putting forth "anticommunism" as the foremost national policy. Commitment to the nation even nominally ought to lay stress on abolition of evils, development of the national economy and relieving people from the hardships of life through proper management of the affairs of state. But Park Jung Hee attached more importance to the face of his boss the United States than to the face of his nation. His nature as a flunkey and traitor to the nation revealed itself in the second article of his commitment, which provides, "We will continue our adherence to the United Nations Charter and faithfully fulfill other international agreements. At the same time we will restrengthen our existing ties with the United States and other free nations."

This shows well the sorry aspect of Park Jung Hee who had to study the mood of his master. Bent on flattery, he turned eyes filled with terrible venom toward the nation.

Park Jung Hee enacted several hundred evil laws within a few months and carried out a wholesale roundup of patriotic forces in the whole area of south Korea through summary military trials.

Many prisons which had been built at the time of Syngman Rhee's "government" were packed to bursting point.

Over 780 Leftists who had been confined in prisons in different parts of south Korea were transferred to Taejon prison in August 1961, after the May 16 coup, myself among them.

Four or five prisoners shared one cell, and only special cases were kept in solitary confinement. Every day "revolution" radio broadcasts rang out from the loudspeaker of the special ward: "Anticommunism is the No.1 state policy...." Not satisfied with the "National Security Act," the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction passed a new anticommunist act. At such a time the comrades made enormous efforts to obtain every piece of information and convey it to all the inmates by knocking on the walls. (The prison was renamed a "reformatory" as of January 1, 1962.) But of course it was still an oppressive prison. A double knock meant that one was listening, and a rapid succession of knocks meant that a warder was coming.

The information obtained with great effort was all disheartening. Briefly speaking, Park Jung Hee's government worked for "anticommunism" and permanent division of the nation. It can be said that from then on, Park, who had fought communism as a secret agent from the time of the Ryosu-Sunchon incident immediately after liberation openly went over to the fight against communism. Therefore it could not be expected that a warm wind would blow in the special ward of the reformatory.

It is vivid in my memory that the students who were imprisoned in those days were very courageous. The reformatory authorities did not allow the several thousands of students and intellectuals who were arrested after the May 16 coup to approach the special ward of Taejon Reformatory, where unconverted prisoners were locked up. I wonder whether they did so fearing that they might be dyed Red by the "vicious elements". However, there were opportunities for the two groups to meet.

Once I was called to the instruction section office on account of some affair when I heard a seemingly young student shouting in the next room.

"I do not deny this country but oppose your military regime."

Soldiers stood on guard with rifles, and a major general made a tour of the reformatory every morning and evening. Nevertheless, the student fearlessly uttered what he thought. Hearing his voice, I was moved to tears.

They were the patriots who rose in the April 19 Uprising and overthrew Syngman Rhee's dictatorial "government". As for Park Jung Hee's "government", it was a toadstool growing on the soil they had prepared by shedding blood. If history is to be fair, betrayal of the nation ought to be condemned by patriotism and injustice be judged by justice.

At the sight of young people being tortured and interrogated by mili-

tary gangsters I was pained more than when I myself was subjected to such suffering. However, on the other hand, I took pride in the fact that as long as the younger generation was growing up loving the country, there was no need to worry about the future of the country and a bright day would surely come to the dark south Korea.

"Why Are Communists' Wives All Virtuous Women?"

The military "government" which sent unconverted Leftist prisoners to the special wards of Taejon Reformatory began to resort to all kinds of outrages.

Not satisfied with the walls of the reformatory, they built another wall around the special wards and a watchtower at every corner in which were installed machine-guns.

Of course, the guns were levelled at us. Within their range were the special wards Nos 4, 5, and 6 where we were locked up.

Each building had about 30 cells on each side of a corridor. Ward No. 4 had 76 cells and was said to be the longest ward in south Korea. Mr. An Chang Ho was once thrown into ward No. 6 under Japanese rule, so his wife has been there and seen it.

The three special wards the Japanese built were designed for the imprisonment of patriots.

Taejon prison, which had been an instrument for the oppression of patriots under Japanese rule, began to prove its worth again under Park Jung Hee's rule. In winter the walls of the cells were covered with a thick layer of frost, and we were kept busy scratching it off with a dustpan into the chamber pots to get rid of it, because the frost in the "Siberia" ward (the nickname of the special ward) took away warmth from our bodies. Ward No. 7 was newly built in the narrow empty space between wards Nos. 4 and 6 to make up for the shortage of cells. The high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Justice came and watched this and the head of the prison accompanying them noisily talked, saying, "A hotel has been built", while inspecting it.

However, in the first winter after its completion some of the inmates died from cold in ward No.7. The warders vied with each other in maltreating Leftist prisoners. They seemed to consider it a new way to get promotion under the new rabidly anticommunist regime. They would take away underwear and some times even blankets from us. Every morning we were told to sound the buzzers in our cells if anybody had died of cold

during the night. But of course the buzzers were not sounded until the dead men's breakfasts had been delivered.

The boiled rice balls were no larger than the prison ration of four spoonfuls in the 1950s.

The prisoners were served somewhat larger boiled rice balls only when they went out to work in a factory. But as we Leftists were not allowed out to work, we had to go hungry.

Later I learned that the boiled rice ball to be served to the inmates who did not go out to work ought to be bigger if it was made according to the current rule laid down legally.

But the ball of boiled rice served to us rarely reached the rationed amount, for the prison officers often took some of it for themselves. In addition, we had to drink our soup out of rubber shoes. This was because the tin can supplied to us as a bowl quickly became rusty.

In those days the common inmates from the general ward beyond the fence were made to gather in the yard and, instead of physical exercise, to do close-order drill with loud shouts which rang all day long. But there was virtually no physical exercise for us.

The May 16 military junta was instilling the military spirit of their own in the reformatory like the Spartan education of the 1980s. Under this circumstance the health problem of the "Red" could not be their concern.

Cold, hunger and lack of physical exercise were daily impairing the health of over 780 inmates in the special ward.

But the most inhuman measure of suppression taken by the Park Jung Hee's "government" after we were gathered in Taejon prison in 1960 was the one prohibiting us from meeting our families.

At the time the head of Taejon prison was Yun Pyong Hui, who had committed every evil act imaginable as chief warder under Japanese rule. On his instruction, the prison officers did not allow even an 80-year-old mother, who had made a long journey from a remote village to meet her son. They rather strove to alienate our comrades and families from us, telling the families: "If he gives up his ideology, he will be set free right away. But he is stubborn, thus causing trouble to his parents, wife and children. He is a profligate."

They recorded the words of the families begging for permission to meet their sons and showed the record to the inmate in question who did not even know that his family members had been there. Or they used to tape-record the tearful voices of their family members and play them over the loudspeaker of the special ward.

I was fortunate in this respect, for I had no family to call on me.

The tearful voice of the wife of a young inmate calling her husband

"Mr. Tae Su" was transmitted through the loudspeaker of the special ward one evening. Her voice is still ringing in my ears.

I was in such a frame of mind. How bitter the person concerned must have felt! They trifled the loftiest human feeling that way.

They made such a mean attempt to convert patriots, taking advantage of their human love as their main "weak point". I wonder how to qualify their meanness.

Yun Pyong Hui, too, seemed to have been unsuccessful in his endeavours to convert political offenders by alienating parents from their sons and husbands from their wives. Later I heard that he lamented, saying, "Why are communists' wives all virtuous women?"

Hearing this remark, I guessed how they harassed the parents, wives and children of the political offenders outside the prison.

An inmate of ward No. 4 had an attack of acute apendicitis and was taken to an outside hospital where he underwent an operation. When he recovered consciousness after the operation he opened his eyes and found his old mother at his bedside. But it was not out of any humane consideration that the reformatory authorities had specially allowed his old mother to meet him, but to simply make her pay for the operation.

He had to return to the special ward, leaving his old mother behind who was weighed down with worries about her son who looked so emaciated after the operation and worry about paying for the operation.

The military junta instituted the novel post of special reformatory officer to deal with unconverted Leftist prisoners as of 1962.

Around that time most of them were men who had served as prison officers under Japanese rule or were former Japanese policemen or former Kwantung Army members.

It was mainly poorly educated people at the lowest echelon of the Japanese fascist system who mainly served as prison warders.

Mathematics on the Prison Floor

However, some quite well educated men were chosen in the 1960s to act as warders in the special cell block.

As a result, even prison officers who were university graduates or had been lieutenant colonels in the south Korean army appeared. It goes without saying that those who were anticommunist were preferred.

It was easier for us to deal with such specially chosen prison officers than with those who had worked for the Japanese and who were com-

pletely ignorant. This was because we could talk to them or even argue with them.

I found out that most of them were astonished at the dreary environment of the Taejon special ward. Several times I heard them complaining, "I took this job thinking that a reformatory officer was a respectable job. But I found that a reformatory officer is none other than a jailer."

Moreover, as the reformatory was evocative of an icebox in winter and a sauna in summer, they seemed to be greatly impressed at seeing the way our comrades coped.

The ward for general offenders which was filled with loud noises, quarrelling voices and shouts of jailers was reminiscent of a market. So, when these new prison officers entered the special ward for the first time they must have been astonished at how quiet this place with over 780 prisoners was.

When they looked into the cells through observation hole to see what the inmates were doing, they found that the "Reds" were all absorbed in reading.

Later I heard one of the new officers say, "I felt humble at the sight."

Every one of us resolved to improve himself as much as possible in prison by drawing up a reading plan. Since the sending-in of social science books was entirely prohibited, we chose other subjects, such as Chinese classics, history, languages or medicine. Some tackled mathematical problems.

How then did comrades solve mathematical problems in a prison cell where there were no writing instrument? They used as writing brushes chopsticks whose tips were bound with threads pulled from their clothes and dipped in water. Then they would write watery symbols on the floor.

One educated prison officer expressed admiration when he saw someone solving problems of differential and integral calculus on the floor in this way.

He said, "I, too, studied hard in my university days. But I have never seen such single-mindedness and diligence in study."

He often muttered to himself: "I don't know why I came here." Some time after he was not seen again.

He who was specially chosen, given the assignment to make us convert, fell into such a frame of mind. So the authorities might have taken some measure or he himself might have resigned, thinking he was not fit for the job.

In fact few of these specially chosen prison officers served more than one year and one even committed suicide.

I wondered whether the young man despaired of doing what he did

not want to do every day, compelled to take the job because of the difficulty of finding employment. This must not be the only reason which prompted him to decide on suicide. There must be a serious background of it, considering that the reformatory authorities tried to hush up the event.

The young man believed the anticommunist education and propaganda which the authorities conducted for nearly a half century in such a manner as passing off white for black and came to take such a resolute decision when he realized that all of it was false and hypocrisy, I suppose.

Behind his suicide there must have been disillusionment at the south Korean authorities and their lying propaganda.

Concerning his death, I think that the hypocritical education and propaganda the south Korean authorities are conducting persistently are as murderous as prisons and bayonets.

March 9 Outcry Struggle

Our resentment was mounting against the regime which was tormenting us both physically and mentally, and exploded in a big struggle in 1964.

This came to be known as the "March 9 outcry struggle."

In the Taejon special cell block was a punishment room, which went by the name of the "mokbang" (dark room). It was not much bigger than a large coffin. One could not even stretch one's legs out properly in these. There was a very small window in the wall, which was covered by iron bars and planks, so that the sunlight could not enter. Hence its name. I realized there for the first time what great pain the impossiblity of stretching one's legs causes. Nothing is more humiliating than to be locked up in the punishment room and crouch with bent legs for several days or months. A comrade named Kwak Pyong Il was thrown into the punishment room unconscious after being brutally beaten during interrogation.

The next morning, March 9, an orderly who took charge of cleaning the corridor, cried out, "Someone has died!"

The dead man was Comrade Kwak. If the orderly had not uttered that startled cry the murder of Comrade Kwak doubtlessly would have been covered up. He could not be considered otherwise than to have been beaten to death while being interrogated. My whole body trembled with anger, and all the other comrades were affected in the same way.

During roll-call that morning somebody shouted at the top of his voice, "Clear up the cause of his death!"

The next moment all the inmates in the 76 cells in cell block No.4 jumped up at once and shouted, "Explain the cause of his death!" and "Long live national reunification!"

The cries spread to the other special cell blocks.

The roll-call was halted and the guards fired blank shells at the inmates.

Alerted by the shots, nearby army unit rushed to the reformatory, thinking that a revolt had broken out there and shouted, "Open the gate". This caused confusion.

The cunning reformatory governor set his wits to work momentarily, fearing that he would be brought to account for it if the disturbance would be known to the outside.

He sent back the troops, telling them that riot suppression exercise was under way.

After the incident the prison authorities handcuffed all of inmates, beat them in turns and demanded they tell how the struggle was organized and how the inmates communicated with each other.

They seemingly did not understand that the resentment stirred up in our hearts at their inhuman treatment of us in the past several years had burst out into a resistance struggle spontaneously. They wondered how simultaneous action could be taken without previous consultation.

They did not know that all of us took the same road with the same idea.

I remember that the tense situation continued in the 1960s. In 1965 a US military reconnaissance plane, the *RB-47* was shot down when it intruded into the air space of north Korea, and in 1967 an escort ship of the puppet navy was sunk by the coastal artillery of the People's Army while infiltrating the territorial waters of north Korea. In January 1968 armed guerrillas attempted to raid the Blue House, the presidential mansion in Seoul.

Two days later, on January 23 the US armed spy ship *Pueblo* was seized by naval vessels of the People's Army while intruding into the territorial waters of north Korea. In April 1969 a US reconnaissance plane, the *EC-121*, was shot down in the air space of north Korea.

Each time, the prison officers said that the United States would retaliate against north Korea immediately.

What should I say about how I felt when I came to hear the resolute voice of the motherland that would return retaliation for "retaliation" and all-out war for "all-out war"?

Of course, the aftereffects of the situation reached us, too. A measure was taken to disperse the Leftist prisoners in Taejon to reformatories in Kwangju, Jonju, Taegu, Mokpho and other places. It was feared that if we were gathered in one place we might become the target of rescue operation of guerrillas. By the way, one year later our comrades in Mokpho reformatory were transferred to inland reformatories again, as coastal areas were regarded as being vulnerable to raids by sea. These increased our faith in victory all the more.

I had pride in the fact that we had the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the motherland which the United States dared not to slight because General Kim Il Sung was at its helm.

Anyway, we were treated by Park Jung Hee's "government" as "enemy No.1". From the lowest prison officer up to head of the prison, all of them were unanimous that we were wretches who deserved to be killed but were being kept alive reluctantly.

It meant that we ought have been murdered indiscriminately after being made to dig our own graves in the period of 1952 to 1954, but they did not murder us in consideration of world public opinion and the prestige of being a "law-abiding country". In their eyes we were neither human beings nor fellow countrymen, but merely "Reds".

I once wondered who on earth imbued them with such a rabid conviction. Doubtless it was the Japanese militarists and US imperialists, and the latter's puppets Syngman Rhee and Park Jung Hee, I thought.

In his youth and in the process of his "Leftist" activity (of course, as a spy) he had engaged in together with his elder brother Park Sang Hee, Park Jung Hee had the opportunity to see the true colours of our comrades.

Park Jung Hee himself surely knew that our comrades who prized their faith more than their lives would not be made to give up their ideas by offers of money, honors or high position.

The only way was to isolate us entirely from society. So, they locked us up in the special cell blocks surrounded by another wall within the wall of the reformatory and strove to shorten our lives by starvation and beatings.

I was transferred to Kwangju Reformatory in 1968, when political offenders were dispersed to different prisons. I was 50 years old at that time.

The Forties in the Taejon Special Cell Block

When I was in my 30s I ran around snow-covered Mount Jiri devoting

myself to national reunification. After my arrest I passed my days in a solitary prison cell, subjected to hunger, physical torture and loneliness. The only hope I had was that I would be set free in seven years and that then I could begin my life again. After release from prison I was at a loss what to do while striving to earn a living. I despaired utterly when I was again arrested and thrown into Taejon prison owing to the suppression exercised by the Park Jung Hee's "government". I was seized with indescribable despair as I was to stay behind bars all my life, deprived of any opportunity to lay even one brick for national reunification.

As I sat in a cramped and dark prison cell suffering from cold and hunger, I was often tempted to sign a "conversion" document and seal it with my thumbprint. At the very least it would increase the size of my rice ball ration, get me transferred to a bigger and more comfortable cell and hasten the day of my release.

As I got older my tolerance of physical torment became weaker. I badly missed the days when I worked hard in Phungsan and Hungnam supporting General Kim Il Sung's line of building a new country. I felt most distressed at the thought that the longed-for liberation came but the country was divided into two and I was getting old behind bars without being able to do even a day's work to drive out the foreign forces and reunify the country.

But the thick walls of prison surrounding me did not fall back even an inch. The authorities must have been annoyed that they could not shackle the thoughts of the political offenders. Although they made them sit facing the wall, they could not prevent images from appearing before their eyes. No film in the world presents such rich pictures as the recollection, hope and imagination of prisoners who suffer from torture, hunger and cold, I suppose. I, too, often recalled the past days of my life while in prison. And my misdeeds and faults in the years when I was active in Phungsan and Hungnam were as vivid as if they had happened the previous day.

Why had I given that comrade a dressing down on account of a mere trifle? If I could meet him again just once I would beg his pardon.

My only hope was that an opportunity would be offered to me to work again before my death. But all that lay in front of me was the tightly closed prison door. One evening this at last brought me to shed tears.

The reader may ask me, "You had instinctive desire to get rid of physical torment and the hope to lead a life worthy of man in the rest of your life, but why did you spend your 40s, the decade when a man does his best work, shut up useless in prison, when you could have converted and won your release?"

In order to reply to this question, my thoughts turn to my early years.

I recall how I ran with excitement hearing the first shot sounded in Phabal-ri, how I formed the "Red Reading Society". I remember the two empty cartridges from the bullets with which "Oppasi" was shot, the period of my youth when I roamed about Longjing and northeast Manchuria, seeking General Kim Il Sung and how I impatiently waited for the day of national liberation, travelling to Seoul and to and from Japan, with the *Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.*

I recall the man who delivered us from oppression, maltreatment and poverty, awakening us to what true life is, and brought about liberation, agrarian reform, the nationalization of industries and the equality of the sexes, and the worthwhile days when I helped to build a new country, becoming a full-fledged master of the country for the first time in his embrace. The answer is: Because I could not betray the love and blessings of the General, who provided us with a true life befitting the masters of the country.

Our comrades shouted "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" as they fell shedding blood in the mountains and valleys of Mount Jiri because the fate of all of us and the destiny of the nation depended on him, didn't they? I could not betray him even if it meant death. I always remained faithful to our General, who was the source of all our human dignity, happiness and prestige. This thought and faith guarded me as it did the other comrades in prison and bound us with the ties of warm comradeship.

In Taejon special ward only the punishment room and the cells of block No.7, which was built later, were solitary cells. Generally speaking, three or four prisoners were put together in one cell except special cases. In the special ward the prisoners were often moved around between cells. This was aimed at keeping us in strange surroundings. On removal in the Taejon special ward the inmates of one cell were moved to another cell. Therefore, there was little opportunity to widen acquaintance with other prisoners in the Taejon special ward. But no matter how the prison officers tried to isolate us from each other, when we went out for physical exercise we exchanged smiles and winks. Those who have had no such experience will never understand what great strength this can give a prisoner.

As love between man and woman is likened to luxuriant green foliage in summer, so the entangled tree root growing in the soil for thousands of years can be said to be the symbol of comradeship, I think.

But although love between the sexes grows cold as time passes, comradeship lasts forever, whether one does not see one's comrade for

a long time, or whether one's comrade has died already. Can I forget till the end of my days the many comrades who are buried on Mount Jiri?

In the oppressively calm evenings when loneliness stole within the sheer walls of the Taejon special block the sound of scratching on the wall would be heard, followed by tapping. Some comrade might have taken a furtive glance at an item in a newspaper in the instruction section office or overheard snatches of conversation between prison officers. If my comrade in the next cell picked up bits of news by any means, he would send me a signal when the warders were out of earshot, to share it with other comrades and encourage them. I would then convey it to the comrades in the adjoining cell in the same way. This is how we kept united, despite the walls between us.

I learned the news about the capture of the US armed spy ship *Pueblo* and about the shooting down of the *EC-121* high-altitude reconnaissance plane by this method. I also learned by this method the substance of the General's address in which he said that the enemy's "retaliation" would be met with counter-retaliation and "all-out war" with all-out war. The confusion of the authorities exerted its influence on the prison, and we were beaten harder, but we were delighted at the news all the same.

When we heard that the United States had made a written apology at last, we were moved to tears at the thought that we had the General, who was an iron-willed brilliant commander, and the prosperous motherland. At such times we felt lonely no more. We thought that they rather trembled in the face of us and hovered on the brink of death.

The news of the motherland conveyed by tapping on the wall gave us vital energy and courage which hardened our faith and will. Those who have had no such experience will find it difficult to imagine what emotion and excitement news about the motherland caused in persons locked up in prison in the enemy's territory.

The Taejon special block was also a place of struggle.

The aim of our struggle in prison was to keep our faith and courage even in the face of the suppression of Park Jung Hee's military "government" and to hold higher the torch of faith in the dark land which they strove to imbue with anticommunist ideology in the 1960s.

The Present I Wanted to Give to My Wife

Propagandists tried to get us to convert by saying, "You communists have no hearts. You neglect your wives and children." They hinted that if

we renounced our beliefs we would be allowed to meet our dear wives, parents and children. But we did not do it. What reply should be given in the face of the absurd "logic" of trying to separate true human ideology from humanity itself? To this nonsense our comrades generally responded by silence.

We considered it to be an insult to have nonsensical arguments about our loved ones, whose most clean and sacred images were kept in our memories.

As for me, the image of my wife, whom I had left behind in north Korea, served as the mainstay which supported my life.

She must have thought me a heartless husband. In my early married life I often stayed away from home on business. So, when a daughter was born to us, she was christened by other people. I left for the front leaving my 23-year-old wife behind two years after our marriage but did not return home even after the end of the war. I imagined how my wife must have roamed among the crowds of uniformed unfamiliar servicemen looking for me when she met KPA soldiers retreating from south Korea and until the end of repatriation of the POWs after the truce.

Even when I was released after my first term of imprisonment it was impossible to go home because the military demarcation line was tightly sealed. During my 15-years' imprisonment I would hold imaginary conversations with my wife.

The image of my wife sobbing leaning against the side of the door when I left her in July 1950 often returned to me.

Sitting alone in the cell in the calm evening, I would repeat what I had said to her when I left home: "If I do not return, don't remain a widow and get old like my mother. Marry a good man and be happy." After our wedding in 1948 we lived in Hungnam. She taught music and dancing there, and very much wanted to have a piano of her own. I could not afford to buy her one at that time when I was head of the propaganda department of the city Party committee. So, I promised her to buy one for her when we were better off, but I failed to keep my word before I left.

I hoped that she would compose and sing songs for her pupils, playing on the piano she would buy with the money she would save up after having overcoming her sorrow, start a new family and continue her teaching career. I used to watch my mother heaving sighs and shedding tears by her side, who got old remaining a widow after she lost husband at the age of 18, did not I?

I myself made determination while asking my wife time and again to live a good life. I did nothing for her as her husband after wedding. So, I resolved to give her a present for the last time.

After celebrating the wedding in my native place Phungsan in 1948, I promised to my wife not to bring disgrace to the motherland at the thought of her who to me was as dear as the eyes.

She must have thought that her husband had died in the struggle for national liberation. But I determined that the one last present I could give her was to never bring disgrace on the motherland till the day of my death. My wife doubtlessly must have believed that although she had no tidings of me. I wanted to be true to the faith of my wife although I was beyond eyeshot of her. I believed that this was the only thing I could do for her. And I was amply rewarded, for she waited for me, remaining true for 43 years. I wonder whether she would have done so if our feelings had been the conventional ones my interrogators spoke about. No. We met again after remaining true to each other for those stormy 43 years because our love was based on the one true ideology, and this ideology served us as our mental support.

8. ONLY THE DEAD LEAVE THE CHONGJU PROTECTIVE CUSTODY HOUSE

The Yongsan River Flows but...

At the age of 50, when the roots of my hair began to turn grey, I was returned to Kwangju prison where I had been jailed as a prisoner of war in 1952. My thoughts turned to those days when our life hung on a thread before a military judicial officer, who would declare, "Those in the front row shall be shot, those on the back row shall be imprisoned for life." Although wakeful from hunger, I used to look forward to the day when the military demarcation line would be removed and I would be sent home.

When one reaches the age of 50, one has fewer years to live than the years one has already lived. It can be said to be the age for one to finish what one has been doing rather than to begin something new. Many things unsolved in 1952 still remained as national tasks and what I wanted to attain was still the same.

National reunification, yes, it is the supreme national task and, at the same time, my life-long desire. It was my desire to attain it at the risk of my life in and out of prison. I am convinced that without bringing about the day of complete liberation for the whole country there cannot be liberation for me. Renewing the resolve to follow the path I had taken so far to the end with fortitude, I looked with a new eye at the prison in the 1970s in which I had been confined in the 1950s.

Kwangju prison looked just as it had in the old days, apart from a new wing and tighter outdoor surveillance. I and my comrades were confined to walled-in special cell blocks. All the cells were solitary ones not much wider than coffins. I remember that mine was one metre wide and 2.6 metres long. It was stifling to sit in the narrow dark cell with a window looking out on the outhouse.

Years passed, and then one day, when I was taken outside for physical exercise I noticed a young man of about 20 among the prisoners. It was around the year 1973, I suppose. Later I learned that he was a Korean student from Japan who had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. He was called So Jun Sik. There was a flood of oppression in the 1970s in south Korea as never before. Mr. Yun I Sang was kidnapped

in the "East Berlin incident", Comrades Choe Yong Do and Kim Jong Thae were arrested and executed in the "United Revolutionary Party" case. "Spy ring" cases were commonly concocted on occasions of changes of "government" and immediately before elections. I cannot help but be amazed at the similarity in the way these cases were trumped up. It seems that it could not be otherwise because they were reflections of the similar troubles of the gangster "government" of the same character. But the innocent people who are arrested or executed by the "universal prescription" had indescribable hatred and antipathy toward fabricaters of the case.

The So brothers were victims of a similar trumped-up case of a "spy ring of Korean students from abroad" on Park Jung Hee's instructions. So Jun Sik seemed to have learned that no one came to see me, as I hailed from the north. At every chance he would come up to me and try to help me.

Prisoners were allowed to take out and hang blankets on the wall to dry and take them back after they were dried once a week at the time we took physical exercise. When we were out together for exercise So Jun Sik would pass me food hidden in his blanket. When he happened to pass me, he would whisper, "What shall I buy for you?" He asked me what I wanted to eat and said that he would buy it when he bought his own things and send it to me. He had to ask the prison orderly pulling a pushcart loaded with purchased goods, giving him a tip for his services. It was not an easy matter. Anyhow I was very grateful to him for the help he gave me so far. So I could not ask him a favour. At any rate I could do nothing for him. How could I continue to get help from comrades?

The rattle of the orderly's pushcart distressed me, when I was allaying my empty stomach with a small boiled barley ball. Cakes, bread and sweets were delivered at every cell, but the pushcart always passed my cell as I had no access to money. But one day there was a big surprise for me.

One afternoon the food wicket in my cell opened and a bag of candy was pushed in. It had been sent by So Jun Sik. Being very hungry, I ate it all at once. Thinking of it the next moment, I felt ashamed. Mr. So must have paid the orderly a lot of money to deliver it. To think that I had eaten it all before expressing my gratitude to him and before inquiring if there were any hungry comrades!

Such kind concern was continually displayed toward me. A Korean student from Japan, Comrade Kang Jong Gon, and Comrade Kwon Rak Gi imprisoned on account of the "United Revolutionary Party" case and other young people in their 20s like So Jun Sik acted cleverly and helped

prisoners without relatives like me. I knew well the risks they were taking just to do these acts of kindness. Prisoners usually buy only their allowance fearing that jailors or prison orderly might notice if they buy more goods than as usual. They naturally have to go hungry till the next purchase.

Sometimes bread would be conveyed through the food wicket, passed from hand to hand, stretched out by comrades and unnoticed by the warders. I am reminded of Comrade Jo Yong Rae, who gave me a handful of unhulled barley on Mount Jiri. Here in prison, too, south Korean comrades and friends showed the same kindness to me, a fellow countryman from the north. It was a warm feeling stemming from the sense of obligation of revolutionary comrades who have a common wish and desire, transcending the consciousness of being the same nation. Having no way to repay their kindness, I only felt embarrassed receiving their help.

Once Comrade Kang Jong Gon sent me as many as 20 apples. It was the first time I had tasted an apple for ten years.

There were times when I felt happy among the sensitive and enthusiastic south Korean comrades although I sat with a sallow face in my narrow cell without seeing the sunlight most of the time. I was distressed to see that south Korea was still in slumber in spite of the ardent desire of the whole nation.

I composed a song to soothe my feeling of distress. I cite here the words of the song, thinking of the kind south Korean comrades and the 20 tasty and unusually aromatic apples.

The Song of the Yongsan River

Our native place Ryukjabaegi,
Typical of our homeland
Is beautiful and lovable.
The local dialect is
Pleasant to hear.
People there, loving their homeland,
Sing the song of Honam, their native place,
Beating time with a gourd dipper.
National heroes were born there,
Ko Kyong Myong, Kim Tok Ryong and Jon Pong Jun.
The river flows through patriotic Jolla Province.
How beautiful it is!

I want to sing a song about it
And tell the story connected with it,
Although my voice is not sweet.

The cradle of the brilliant culture of Paekje,
It flows watering the fertile land of Honam,
Reflecting in its waters the pretty faces of women
Who pick cotton.
On the shore of the clear stream
They wash worn clothes
Boiled in water with ashes
From barley straws,
Rinsing them as white as alabaster.
How many centuries has it flowed,
Mirroring the pretty faces of smiling women!
O Yongsan River, river of the motherland!
I visualize the pretty faces
Engraved in your bosom.

In the Imjin troubles* people were torn and bled
At the point of gun and sword of Samurai.
You carried waves of the people's sorrow and resentment.
The high spirit of Mount Mudung
Is the symbol of patriotism of Jolla Province.
Volunteers led the van
Tightening their shoestrings,
People rose up together
To beat back the enemy,
Displaying patriotic spirit and wreaking vengeance.
How many centuries have you flowed,
O Yongsan River, river of the homeland?
I recall the patriotic spirit
In your bosom.

People toiled in the fields in the day
In the evening they were summoned by the village head
And told to fill rice bags.
They weaved straw bags all night,
Filled them with gleaming white rice.
Carried them on their backs under the lash.
Loaded them onto ships, which carried them

Along the Yongsan River,
To the port of Mokpho where steamships lay at anchor.
You, Yongsan River, then raised the waves,
Lamenting their hard lot.

Guide for the Japanese invaders
Who trampled our homeland
Was his Highness Ri Wan Yong.
Standard-bearer of division of the liberated homeland
Was noble American doctor Syngman Rhee.
Pro-Japanese and pro-US elements rave about anticommunism,
Shed the national spirit and aggravate division.
Do you know their true nature?
The Yongsan River, nevertheless, flows.

* The Japanese invasion of 1592

Prelude to Severe Repression

The historic North-South Joint Statement was issued on July 4, 1972. Learning of it belatedly, we shed tears of joy, rejoicing over the unanimity of the nation achieved for the first time after liberation. The statement, whose gist was independence, peaceful reunification and grand national unity, presented the supreme task and pledge of the nation. Each word of it expressed the ardent desire, experience and lessons of the nation.

Convinced that no one would dare break this solemn pledge, upon which the fate of the nation depended, I passed days in great excitement, as if national reunification were near at hand. Who could have imagined that those days would be so speedily succeeded by a whirlwind of arrests?

It was the whirlwind of the "October Revitalization" in 1972. Park Jung Hee gave prisons orders to strengthen "anticommunist" education. Later I learned that while we were intoxicated by the July 4 Joint Statement preparations were already being made for forced conversion on instructions from the Blue House.

Around March in 1973 chaplains in charge of conversion operations were openly recruited and in June they were sent to prisons.

Why did the Park "government" hurry with the operation for forced conversion in this period? Around 1972 there were over 500 Leftist prisoners in south Korea. Many of them had been sentenced to capital pun-

ishment, with the death sentence commuted to life or 20 years' imprisonment by the Democratic Party government after the April 19, 1960 Uprising, and many comrades were due to be released from prison after serving their full terms. The treacherous Park Jung Hee clique was planning to break the spirit of our comrades through conversion or kill them through torture. Briefly speaking, it was an outrageous scheme not to release alive the long-term prisoners, the "Enemy No. One".

From the beginning, Park Jung Hee had no intention of living up to the spirit of the July 4 Joint Statement, which reflected the desire of the nation. Park was the son-in-law of Ryuk Jong Gwan, an old cat's-paw of the US intelligence service and himself a traitor to the nation and murderer who informed on and killed many patriots during the "Ryosu-Sunchon incidents". (A mutiny against the south Korean "government" 1948-*Tr.*) For his servility to the foreigners he held the position of head of south Korean army intelligence corps and head of the secret service. He also stage-managed the "May 16 coup d'etat" on behalf of Allen Dulles, then head of the American CIA.

He took no account of the fate of the nation and was blinded by lust for power. Taking advantage of the July 4 Joint Statement as a fine signboard, he busied himself building up an "anticommunist" stronghold.

He framed all kinds of wicked laws and fraudulent cases almost every day and was bent on liquidating all the democratic forces in south Korea and the forces desirous of reunification.

The operation for conversion of the long-term prisoners was a gust of the violent whirlwind of the crazy "October Revitalization" of this dictator.

On the morning of November 9, 1973 the head of the control department of the Kwangju prison shouted:

"From today, there will be no physical exercise, medical care or purchase of goods. 'Reds' refusing conversion will no longer see the sunlight."

The forced conversion and repression were started.

Let me explain to the reader what the significance of "exercise" is in prison.

It is at the time of physical exercise that prisoners are allowed out of their cells once a day for 30 minutes. The jailers watch the prisoners closely and make sure that they do not talk to each other. Nevertheless, prisoners wait for that time because they are allowed to come out of the cell and it is chance for them to bask in the sun. Only those who had been in jail know how important daylight is.

The ban on buying things did not affect people like me, who had no money. But those who had family outside were under a lot of pressure to

renounce their beliefs. That was the reason for the ban.

Then the warders took away all our personal belongings–books, toiletries, underwear, etc.–and transferred us to other cells at the same time. Eight or ten men were put in a cell measuring less than three square metres. So there was hardly enough room for them to stand, to say nothing of sitting. In addition, in the corridor there were placed notorious toughs chosen from among robbers and thieves, who wore armbands with words "rolling pin" stitched on them. It meant that you would be flattened as if by a rolling pin if you created any trouble. Kang Chol Yong, chief of the re-education section, chose them specially for their viciousness.

Particularly nasty were Jong Mu Jong and Won Sam Sil. The former had been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for murder and robbery, and his term had been extended by one year for bad behaviour. The other was a professional thief.

These thugs enjoyed great authority; they even kept the keys to the cells, and so could haul us out and beat us any time.

We went on a hunger strike in protest at such arbitrariness.

Then the chaplains tried to drag us out of our cells by one with the help of toughs with club.

But when they failed to do so due to the stubborn resistance of the cell mates, jailors and *jido* (minor offenders who did errands for jailors) forcibly dragged us out of our cell. From then on the toughs with club began to beat us hard. The jailors did not appear. The toughs with club had keys to prison cells, handcuffs, clubs and policeman's rope. They sat us in the corridor and beat us with club as they pleased. At times they went to the instruction section and came back receiving instructions. They committed other cruelties.

Winter in prison was particularly cold and long. It is no exaggeration to say that it is all winter in prison, except for three months of spring.

At that time it was November, and the thugs took away all the prisoners' blankets except one each, sent in by their family. Quilts were not issued until December 16, and the prisoners were not allowed to buy any bedding or clothing.

They stripped one comrade of all his clothes and kept him handcuffed for three or four days without any blankets at all. When even that could not break his will, they beat him and poured pepper powder into his nose.

At last he contracted a disease and died some time after. Then it was my turn. Won Tu Song was a murderous robber, and strong and stupid beyond measure. Won Sam Sil was of small build but very cruel.

The two of them took me to a washroom, stripped me naked and

poured ice-cold water over me. Then they bound me, suspended me from a beam and beat me with a club. Every time they hit me they would shout, "Will you convert?" Pieces of flesh were ripped off and stuck to the club and it became stained with blood.

At that time I could not make out whether the torment I suffered was physical or mental. At times my whole body and brains seethed like a flame with the violent desire to have my body explode like a bomb so as to scatter blood and pieces of flesh over their beastly faces and the prison cell. I thought I might go crazy, and so I kept a firm grip on myself and counted the blows till I lost consciousness. I tried to endure the torture without losing consciousness, and stared at them with bulging eyes, sweating. In such a state strange visions were conjured up in my mind:

The faces of prisoners convicted of murder, rape and armed robbery seemed to become the faces of the prison governor and the chief jailer, or their urgly faces overlapped with the crow-like face of Park Jung Hee in the Blue House. The faces of those on the seat of authority presented the appearance of these dregs of mankind, murderers, rapers and thieves on account of commonness of their nature, character and essence, but it was not of my making. At the thought of singular "association" of Park Jung Hee with the "toughs with club" I felt as if chill ran through my whole body which became heated during torture. Then the toughs said, "This scoundrel does smile?" My face seemed to have worn a wry smile. When my heated legs touched the board floor I experienced a pleasant feeling and lost consciousness.

In addition to torture, the authorities of the prison would throw eight or ten recalcitrant prisoners into a single prison cell of an area of three square metres so that they could not sleep at night.

In such circumstances many comrades died under torture or committed suicide.

I thought much, standing me on the brink of life and death. Those who had not been near the threshold of death might think that the suicides took a pessimistic view of death, but it is extremely unilateral judgement.

No! Contrary to it, the way to realize the desire to escape despair of life and unendurable torment seems to lie beyond the threshold of death and therefore death is thought as a refuge and peaceful another world. So they cross the threshold without hesitation.

What stopped me stepping over the threshold of death?

It was because they wanted me to cross that threshold, so that they could expunge my name from the list of enemies. It seemed to me to be another form of "conversion".

I had to live! Life means struggle. This thought hardened in me at that

time as never before. I must lead a life of fortitude, waiting for the day when human faith can be justified before the nation and history. I was aware how arduous path the resolution burgeoned in my heart in resistance to their suppression had to go through.

There were people who chose other "life" on the brink of life and death.

The path of "conversion" was a path to an empty life for a man who had lost his faith and succumbed to their tyranny.

Tearful Conversion Ceremony

It was difficult to endure the torture, but it was more painful to see the faces of those who converted after torture. When someone converted the jailors would take him to the cell where he had been confined. There he would declare before his cell mates: "I have converted". They took the convert to other ward and the sick one to the sick ward.

I remember the tears of a man who said "I have converted" in front of his comrades. Among my cell mates was Ho Hyo Gil, who was about 25 years old. He was nice-looking and well-mannered, so I made friends with him. One day he came to hold conversion ceremony. He was about to cry, daring not to open his mouth, and I had to continue to watch him. I thought inwardly, "How can you behave that way?" I was so sorry to see him weeping.

As he was being taken away I called out, "Don't weep..."

That was the last chance I had to talk to him. Several months later I saw him from a distance when I went out for physical exercise. Even then he shed tears. Later my heart ached and I suffered from mental agony for several days.

"You villains! You break such good young men. Can you be human?" I raged.

Is it possible to defile sacred human beings that much? They insult everything sacred and beautiful about man, his faith and body, and make him suffer. They find the joy of the victory in this...

The south Korean authorities invented the "method of operation for conversion", the most cruel and barbarous method and thus recorded another chapter of history of their hell. Human history shows that it is possible to deprive man of his land, property and life. But I think there are no such rascals in the world as the south Korean authorities, who concocted a method to deprive man of his spirit and inflict the most intense suffering on him.

They invented various fiendish forms of torture: The Genghis Khan torture involved suspending the victim over a fire; the snake torture was when the victim was thrown naked into a cell filled with poisonous snakes. Females were subjected to varieties of sexual torture. In this period hundreds of cruel methods of torture were invented in the dungeons of the south Korean Central Intelligence Agency on Namsan Hill and in reformatories and prisons. They tortured the So brothers until they were hardly recognizable. Really disgusting was a photo I saw in a certain journal after my release from prison. In it the sexual torturer of woman Kwon Mal Ja was smiling broadly. This showed the reality of south Korea, its inhumanity and hypocrisy.

The tears of young Ho Hyo Gil stirred up in me hatred against those who had brought him to such a state rather than anger against him, and I could not bring myself to sleep all that night. This hardened my spirit of resistance against those who try to crush human nature.

Later Ho Hyo Gil was taken away somewhere and was not seen any more.

Around November 20 the second round of repression began with a view to making those who had not yielded surrender. This was marked by water torture.

They laid us on a one-metre-long bench, tightly bound our arms and legs and covered our faces with a wet cotton towel. Then they poured water into our noses and mouths from a 10-litre kettle.

I and other long-term prisoners underwent water torture many times. The police detectives regulated the intensity of torture as befit the "master of torture" so that it does not lead the victim to death. But the chaplains recklessly poured water into the nose and mouth. It was really hard to endure it. After water torture 15 comrades converted, and became paraplegic as a result.

On the evening of December 5 So Jun Sik attempted suicide by slashing one of his wrists with a piece of glass after enduring water torture. He was discovered by a warder, covered in blood. The coldness of the cell had congealed the blood, and this saved his life. I had feared that So, who was inexperienced in struggle, would not be able to hold out. But I felt ashamed of such a thought when he resisted the torturers. Any way, after this incident the savage torture sessions were suspended.

As a result of the torture, the number of unconverted prisoners in Kwangju prison fell from 64 in November 1973 to 25 at the beginning of 1974. The toughs were evidently told that the more prisoners they forced to convert the more their own prison terms would be reduced. The prison

officials too probably depended for promotion on the success of the operation. I myself can not understand how I held out.

Why Did Not I Convert?

Those who tortured us called us "wicked, savage, or Reds". They said that the "Red" idea is fearful, considering that the unconverted did not want to give up "that idea" even under the physical torment hardly endurable for a human being. Victim writhes in agony when he is beaten while cold water is showered over his naked body in winter or when the barbarous act of pouring water into his nose is committed, binding his limbs tightly. But resentment becomes intensive that much against the beastly torturers, human only in shape. To think that those holding political power do such barbarous violence while the gangsters who lynch people to rob money and gold do not dare commit such atrocities! We felt intense resentment against those beastly fellows who did not treat us as human beings and firmly resolved not to give in to them. That was why our comrades did not break even in the face of extreme violence. Who were the wicked savages? My comrades who resisted to the end to preserve their pride as human beings in the face of hardly endurable beatings and water torture or the underlings of political power who beat people like dogs and heaped abuse upon them because they refused to surrender? They are really the slaves of the "anticommunist" fanatics who lost all human qualities, I think.

I had another reason for not surrendering to them. During the water torture in my mind's eye I saw the face of my wife who looked into my eyes steadfastly on the day of our wedding, when I gave her a pledge, telling her my life's motto. I writhed in agony, clenching teeth.

"I must keep the pledge... I must hold out this trial... This is the only gift I can give you. I will not succumb..."

These are the reasons why I did not convert. I explained this in the memoirs I wrote in south Korea. But I could not write other things at that time. I could not write that I inwardly sang the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* and the *Song of the Red Flag* recalling the five years after liberation, when I had been happiest.

I was a member of the Workers' Party of Korea who had found a genuine life in the embrace of the General and a war correspondent of the People's Army who had taken part in the sacred war for national reunification, receiving dispatch paper bearing the national emblem of the Republic. There was no other way for me.

At the beginning of 1975 I became crippled. I would rather have been wounded in battle, but I was mortified at being crippled by the violence of the gangsters in prison.

One day in 1975 at the time of news broadcast for the minor offenders in the third ward the voice of explaining the "Public Security Act" reached us. I strained my ears, but could not understand clearly what was said.

Then I went to the toilet and asked the comrades in the neighbouring cell, "What news did you hear just?" Just at that time the ruffian-overseer who was in charge of cleaning of the ward and surveillance of convicts seemed to have chanced to pass by my cell. He came into my cell kicking the door open and pulled me out. I was taken to the washroom and lost consciousness, beaten ruthlessly by the ruffians. I looked round coming to and found that I was in the prison cell. The whole prisoner's gown I wore was wet as if it was poured with cold water.

Seeing that I came to, the ruffians took me to the instruction section office. On the table of the head of the instruction section was a written statement which said that I forced the comrades in the next cell "not to convert". The head of the instruction section told me to seal the statement with the thumb unconditionally. It was evident that they intended to harass me for several months without proper ground. When I refused it, Kim Hong Ryol in charge of operation for conversion in the instruction section who was beside me and other jailors rushed to me and beat me ruthlessly. Even the priest from the "God's church" joined them in beating me.

After the beating I lost consciousness. When I opened my eyes, I found that I was in my cell. I could not budge and, feeling my body, barely moving my hands, I found that one of my right ribs and both my legs were broken and I could not move. I lay still for about six months without any medical care. The rib knitted together properly but the leg bones did not set, and I became lame.

In 1975 the jailers told us that a law "which will not allow unconverted Reds like you to see daylight ever again is being drawn up." And so the Park Jung Hee regime railroaded through the "Public Security Act" in July.

Many people who had been released from prison after having served ten or 20 years in prison and were about to found a family and begin a normal life were arrested and confined to prison without trial on the pretext of "protection and surveillance."

Around that time in prisons again began the torture to force conversion upon those who were about to be released after having served full

prison terms, like me. Convicts were taken to the instruction section office by one and were tightly bound and beaten by chaplains and jailors. They were released only after they fainted more than twice. On being released most could not walk properly and were made to crawl back to their prison cells, beaten with clubs and kicked on the way.

In addition, the jailers committed the brutality of taking away drugs sent in by family members from those who had contracted chronic diseases during their long confinement and could hardly pass a day without taking medicine.

Comrade Kim, who had worked as a journalist on the *Rodong Sinmun* in Pyongyang after liberation, suffered from serious gastroenteritis and barely maintained his existence with the medicine sent in by his family for 15 years in prison. In 1975 the warders took away his medicine. The warders said that they would give him the medicine back if he converted. Comrade Kim went on a hunger strike several times, and at last in June 1976 he tore a strip from a blanket and hanged himself from his window frame. The previous day he said to me, "I can't live any longer. I would rather kill myself than die of disease." I tried to dissuade him, but in vain.

In addition, Comrade Sin who had become deranged due to severe beatings and torture, also committed suicide by hanging himself in November 1975. And Comrade Choe, a pianist who had graduated from a music school in Japan and constantly suffered from high blood pressure was denied drugs and died in agony one evening in May 1976. He was in agony, heaving painful groans for about 30 minutes in his solitary cell and breathed his last.

Hearing his groans, we could not go to him to help, barred by the iron fence and walls of Kwangju special ward. Was it the place for people to live in? Were we who were confined to it human beings?

It is impossible to enumerate all kinds of torment our comrades underwent, being forced to conversion. Kwangju prison placed first among the four prisons in south Korea at the expense of blood our comrades shed in the assessment of the result of conversion operation.

A "Hotel Is Being Built in Chongju"

The comrades who served their full prison terms without converting to the last in Kwangju reformatory were transferred to Block Eight of Taejon reformatory on the pretext of preventive detention. The number of prisoners subjected to preventive detention who were taken there from other reformatories and society at large seemed to have reached approximate-

ly 155. The cell block, which had been built by the Japanese, was old and dirty. Originally there were 20 cells, but these were made into 40 cells, by dividing each cell into two. As a result, the area of one cell did not exceed three square metres.

Those who they judged might be converted were put into cells of No. 1 to No. 10 singly, and the others were put into cells No. 11 to 40 by threes and fours.

Among those who were subjected to preventive detention was a Japanese called Kono Kishio, who had been released from Inchon prison after having served a long prison term. Around 1976, confined to a solitary cell, he committed suicide by hanging himself from the ventilation window. I had no opportunity to contact him in his lifetime, so I don't know why he was in jail in south Korea or why he decided to kill himself.

After this incident no inmates were placed in cells alone, and even the small ventilation windows were blocked up. Measures such as removing the wire netting from the windows of cells in general cell blocks were taken allegedly to pretend that a reformatory was not really a prison. But thicker wire netting was placed on the windows of Block Eight. The cell toilets, whose tubs buried beneath the floor and covered with a lid, swarmed with maggots. As for meals, physical exercise and reading books, the situation was no better than in prison. Most of the inmates served their full prison term of more than 20 years, undergoing various hardships, aren't they? Nevertheless, they were placed under detention which was no better than confinement to prison on the pretext of preventive detention. We were disgusted with it. When we demanded better treatment the jailers would say, "Be patient for a little longer. A hotel is being built for you in Chongju."

Conversion tactics changed from torture to persuasion after we were transferred to Taejon reformatory. Public procurators came down every three months and interviewed each comrade separately.

Some of them frankly admitted that the "Public Security Act" was an unreasonable law. However, they said that they could help us only if we converted.

In 1977, when the two-year term of preventive detention ended, seven long-term prisoners had converted and were released. Their mental torment is fully understandable. These were the people who had not succumbed to the beastly suppression.

It was said that if one did not convert, one would only leave the place through the back door as a corpse. So I can understand why they weakened, especially if they had founded families and had young children after being released serving full prison terms, or supported old and sick

parents worn out with care about their sons thrown into prison. It was the faith of our comrades to fight for the repeal of the "Public Security Act" without converting even if they get old, confined to the reformatory all their life. No one blamed them for choosing release from the reformatory, giving up struggle. Later I was told that some of them had guilty consciences, and rapidly fell ill and died.

In November 1978 the Chongju Protective Custody House, the "Hotel" they said they were building, was completed, and 110 prisoners were transferred there from Taejon.

It there is difference between the so-called Chongju "hotel" and reformatory, it is that prison cells there had water pipes laid. Blocks No. 3 and No. 4 had steam heating systems, but blocks No. 1 and No. 2 had not. Later in the course of struggle we came to know the reason. We were usually housed in Blocks No. 3 and No. 4, but each time a struggle started we were moved to Blocks No. 1 and No. 2.

Food was supplied by retired prison warders. There was no knowing how the former and present warders shared the budget between them, but the food given to us was worthless matter which could be hardly sold in a market.

The exercise yard was barely big enough to hold the inmates of 22 cells. Unlike the assurance of the jailors of Block No. 8 in Taejon, the inmates of the protective custody house had to cut hair as in prison. Briefly speaking, the boastful remark of the administration of Taejon reformatory, "If you go to the protective custody house, everything will be different", was sheer deception.

Many inmates were taken to it on account of triviality and subjected to severe violence.

Our pent-up resentment exploded into a general hunger strike in 1979. The administration responded by putting handcuffs on all the inmates and inflicted violence on them, even enlisting the jailors and trainees of the nearby Chongju reformatory. There was no change in their method.

After the struggle the administration of the protective custody house put additional locks on our doors and thick wire netting was placed on the windows of the cells. There could be no mention of improvement in treatment.

Death-Defying Hunger Strike

On October 26, 1979 Park Jung Hee was killed by Kim Jae Gyu in the

secret restaurant of the Central Intelligence Agency. The assassination of Park Jung Hee was a natural and inevitable outcome of the corruption and contradictions of the south Korean "government". Seizing power through the May 16 coup d'etat, Park Jung Hee wrote the book *The State, the Revolution and I* in justification of himself as President, in which he professed himself the person destined to carry out the historic cause of bringing about a renewal of politics, the economy and national reunification policy, but did not dare to express his raging ambition to perpetuate his power. He said that he would step down from the seat of power of his own accord after establishing correct politics and concede the presidency to a civilian. But later he took off his military uniform and made himself the "civilian" president. He responded to the resistance of the people with the "October Revitalization". Blinded by lust for power like Syngman Rhee, he rigged the election to give himself a third term as president and revealed his reckless intention to perpetuate his power. The south Korean people who had tasted the bitter pill of dictatorship before, again rose in resistance.

The American boss needed another script; it was the establishment of the government of the "Fifth Republic" by Chon Doo Hwan.

It is known to all that the "Fifth Republic" was the government which was established in a bloodbath, including the Kwangju massacre.

Park Jung Hee was killed in the October 26 incident and the wind of democracy called the "Seoul spring" blew in society. But it did not blow in the Chongju Protective Custody House.

I returned from the exercise yard, which we were allowed to use once a day. I suppose it was in the summer of 1980. It was hot and I sweated profusely. I entered the toilet attached to the back of the cell and was cooling myself in the breeze coming in from the back window. Just then the head warder, O Ki Su, happened to pass by and thought that I was not in the cell. At once jailors came into my cell, opening the door, and took me to the underground room without any explanation. They tightly bound my whole body with policeman's rope and ruthlessly beat me. All my fault was that I went out of the cell without permission.

"Rascals, are you human?"

Resentment rather than pain surged up within me.

Taking me to the cell, prison orderly threw me upon the floor of the cell. I was going to faint, but shiver came over me. Let us concede one hundred steps and suppose that the "government" which makes "anti-communism" its state policy wishes to isolate communists from society, it would suffice to isolate us from society "lawfully" till we grow old and die to prevent the dissemination of ideas and organizations. Why is such

continuous violence needed? What on earth do they want? Written statement of conversion or our life?

Our pent-up resentment again exploded on July 7, 1980. The atmosphere was extremely strained because of the resistance struggle in Kwangju and the murders of citizens there by "martial law" troops. But we behind bars did not know about that. We only guessed that something unusual was happening when we saw the warders, changing into combat uniforms.

Their oppression of us became worse. One problem was that of books. As a result of our insistent demand we were allowed to have up to ten books. But around that time the administration of the reformatory reduced the number of books, which were allowed us, to three. On the morning of July 7 I heard So Jun Sik protesting vigorously against the restriction to Choe Jong Dae, head warder of the cell block.

Shouting broke out from many cells, and Comrade Hwang, who kicked his door, was taken to the torture room in handcuffs.

All of us went on a hunger strike, demanding his release. Then the administration referred to the situation in Kwangju and "martial law", threatening us by saying that tanks were stationed outside and requested us to stop hunger strike. From their remark it was evident that the situation was strained but we could not give up the strike till Comrade Hwang returned.

Our hunger strike was staged nearly at the same time as the uprising in Kwangju. Was this a coincidence? We still did not know about the uprising but we went on hunger strike at the risk of our lives because we could not endure any more. The culmination of their suppression and the culmination of resentment and thirst for struggle brought about the explosion of anger within and without the prison. It was not accidental. The consciousness that out struggle had broken out as an inevitable consequence of history raised the fighting spirit of the long-term prisoners.

"Comrades, our comrades outside are fighting together with us", someone shouted. The jailors made frantic efforts to break our fighting spirit.

Three inmates had been placed in each cell so far, but from July 11, when our hunger strike began, all of us were separated and put into solitary cells. From the seventh day of the hunger strike the administration took us out of the cells in turn and force-fed us four at a time, tied to a bench. And we were forced to open our mouth, with our head thrown back, and a hose was put into our throat, through which watery gruel was pumped usually, but they injected salty water into our throats because we had refused even to drink water. They intended to make us thirsty by

injecting salty water into our throats and induce us to drink water. When four inmates including Comrade So Jun Sik were taken to the detention section office, comrades Kim and Choe are said to have been the first to be force-fed. When Choe was taken into the room, Comrade Kim who entered before him was dying, foaming at the mouth. Comrade Choe testified that the hose seemed to have entered bronchial. So they could not continue forced feeding any more.

Comrade Pyon who was forcibly fed before Comrade Kim lost consciousness was carried out on someone's back and was in a serious state. After force-feeding him, they threw Pyon into the underground cell. Already 12 or 13 inmates began to vomit or had loose bowels, and the entire underground cell was filled with fill. On entering, underground cell, Comrade Pyon began to spit blood. As his groaning was heard outside, the chief jailor shouted, "Gag him!". The warder of the underground cell, nevertheless, seemed to have a bit of conscience and did not do so.

Those who had been thrown in the underground cell were brought back to their own cells only at dawn. No emergency medical treatment had been given to Comrade Pyon. It was not known when and how he died. We only heard that he died.

The day before the forced feeding I was taken to O Ki Su, detention section chief, accompanied by the medical section chief. He threatened me, saying, "Do you know that the martial law command is paying special attention to the hunger strike here? If you do not stop the hunger strike we will transfer you to the martial law command."

Then the medical section chief, who sat beside him, said with an air of anxiety: "Your blood pressure has reached 130 and 230. What would happen to you if you were transferred to the martial law command in such a state?

Outside there was a bus, whose engine was running, orderlies were busy loading my belongings onto it.

Someone was heard to shout outside: "Send him out quickly."

When I, nevertheless, continued to hold out, O Ki Su asked me:

"What are you going to do?"

"First say that our demands are conceded."

He heaped abuse upon me. I got angry and shouted at him: "Send me if you like. The soldiers won't be any worse than you are."

O Ki Su went out. Some time after he returned and shouted at the jailor, "Sent him to the martial law command."

I was put on the bus, which went out of the yard but stopped at the building next door. I could not help laughing at the O's trick. I found the whole ward was empty. Comrade Rim had been brought to the extreme

cell before me. I was put into cell No. 14 of block No. 1 and some time later Comrade Rim and Comrade Han were also taken there. There was no doubt that O Ki Su obviously told a lie to the other comrades that we were sent to the martial law command. We who were subjected to preventive dentention could not be detained in Chongju reformatory for an indefinite period and had to be returned to the protective custody house. I rather pitied them who tried to stop hunger strike even by telling a lie which would be soon revealed.

The hunger strike, which started on July 7, lasted for 17 days. Most of my comrades were old and suffered from high blood pressure, heart trouble or stomach ulcers. To fast for 17 days was to risk their lives. Two comrades died in the course of the forced feeding, and some time after the hunger strike two more comrades died of aftereffects of the hunger strike. Particularly a Comrade Kim breathed his last without breaking his fast. When their dead bodies were carried out I was extremely pained and made a pledge to inform the public of their tragic ends if I myself survived.

Some time after the hunger strike the attitude of the administration abruptly changed. Fearing that the death of two inmates due to their forced feeding might get them into trouble, it supplied us with better blankets and gave us new mosquito nets. They even said, "Your demands were reported to the minister of justice. The Blue House knows them. Improvement measures will be taken soon."

But as the weather became colder with the advent of winter we were not allowed to wear towels around our necks like mufflers as we had been used to doing when it was cold or sit on a blanket spread on the floor. It was not easy for the emaciated old men with bony buttock to sit on the floor all day long like a stone figure of Buddha. We kept lodging protests, but the attitude of the warders was as harsh as immediately after the May 16 coup d'etat. In those days all day long we could hear shouts as the officers of the Chongju reformatory conducted military drills. Later I learned that it was designed for will-power training.

O Ki Su's remark that the Blue House knew about our hunger strike seemed to be true. Later we learned that martial law commander Chon Doo Hwan inspected the reformatory immediately before our hunger strike. There was no knowing whether he directly gave instructions to be harsh to us or whether the prison officers felt that something was wrong because the top commander had made an inspection. After it they began to press us and even brought two inmates to death by forced feeding. I was told that some time after, Section Chief O Ki Su was promoted to the deputy director of the reformatory, far from being brought to account for

his crimes. The despotic regime of the late Park Jung Hee seemed to have been restored.

Later they continued to fight in demand of improvement in treatment, but it is no exaggeration to say that there was almost no improvement till the resistance struggle in June 1987. Chon Doo Hwan, who took the seat of power in place of Park Jung Hee, was nothing less than a anticommunist and anti-democratic toadstool which struck root in south Korea.

Thinking of Azaleas

After we were all put into solitary cells in connection with the hunger strike in 1980 we had to stay there till the preventive custody section of the reformatory was closed in 1988-1989. It was said that after my release there were instances in which the inmates who waited for their release in 1989 were put together in cells for several months. Some people perhaps may think that it is better to stay in a solitary cell than in a cell where many people are crowded together. So I would like to comment briefly on solitary confinement.

The inmates subjected to solitary confinement had no chance to exchange a word with other people all day long. When they pass ten or 20 years in such a manner, they fall in such a state that they even forget what reciprocation of warm feelings between people means.

Their feelings naturally dry up and they retreat into a breathing fossil-like existence. If in the evening when dreadful quietness reigns I sit in the solitary cell as ever in the passage of time in which it is hardly possible to distinguish today from yesterday and listen to the zoom of the fluerescent lamp, I can be seized with fear at any moment.

"Am I going mad?"

However, missing the affectionate glance and kind voice of a human being was rather like hoping to enjoy luxury. Such a mentality did not last long, for merciless physical violence unfailingly ensued. Even in such moments there was one person who guarded me. He was General Kim Il Sung, who was the mental support for all of us.

At night I would shed tears, looking through the iron bars at the glistening stars in the far northern sky. I shed tears like a baby missing its father. These tears seemed to purify my mind and gradually remove the maddening mental and physical torment.

Then in my mind's eye there appeared the faces of my mother and wife, the waving of my daughter's hand and my comrades rushing to meet me...

In 1985 again two comrades killed themselves in protest against the torture which was still committed by the conversion campaign team. Comrade Ri, who lay unconscious in his cell, beaten black and blue by prison officials, committed suicide, leaving his will behind, which said, "We must resist and break the enemy's suppression rather than being beaten to death like this. Comrades, I hope you will fight in my stead." He hailed from Chungchong Province and had been an English-language teacher at a secondary school. Once the prison administration put an insane person in his cell to harass him, but that man, impressed by his personality, took care of him. A week later Comrade Hwang, who had been harassed by torture intended to make him convert, took his life, following Comrade Ri. He left his will which said, "You can never kill all of us. If only one of our comrades remains alive, he will tell the truth. The people and history will never be silent."

Sitting in the prison where death was a common occurrence, I wanted to watch the fortitude of life. I wanted to enjoy the aroma of steadily burning life, the life resisting death.

One day in the exercise yard I found an azalea which had been plucked and thrown away. I picked it up and planted it in a corner of the cell out of the sight of the warders. I watered it and covered it with a blanket when it was cold and tended it with sincerity, hoping that it would put out flowers. The next spring it put forth light pink flowers.

I was overjoyed. It blossomed out as if speaking of the thirst of my life and agony of my soul. "Azalea," I said, "You are my soul flying to my beloved country and my friend!

Although we were not allowed pens or paper, I composed a poem called *Thinking of Azaleas*, engraving one line after another in my memory. Later, whenever I felt oppressed by the silence and loneliness in the cell I recited this poem. Then I felt reassured and relaxed. In my most difficult days the poem served me as a friend. It goes as follows:

Thinking of Azaleas

Roses are red
Not because of thorny craftiness
Not because of blood-coloured voluptuous beauty.
Azalea, flower of passion
Weeps, sorrowing over the divided motherland.

Are you so pure

Because your petals are dyed
With the blood of the cuckoo
Which warbles till exhaustion?
The blooming azalea smiles,
Its modesty is evocative of
My steady love for my unforgettable beloved.
Do you know how much
I think of azaleas?

Egoistic,
The plum blossom blooms hastily
First among the myriad flowers
Before the snow thaws
As if boasting of itself.
But you, azalea, do not flower first
But bloom in good time
In the warm spring breeze,
Dyeing hills and fields pink.
The azalea blooms modestly
Like the symbol of the bright future
Of the new enlivened motherland.
Its modesty is evocative of
My steady love for my unforgettable beloved.
Do you know how much
I think of azaleas?

The anti-Japanese guerrillas
Won victory after victory
Braving the rain of bullets and shells
In the blizzard-covered vast alien country
In the biting cold of winter.
When azaleas bloomed on hills and in fields
In the warm sping,.
Treading the soil of the motherland
Across the Amnok River rising in Lake Chon,
They kissed the soil of the motherland
And inhaled its aroma.
You, pink azalea, welcomed them.
You are evocative of
My steady love for my unforgettable beloved.
Do you know how much

I think of azaleas?
At the foot of Mt. Paektu
Rising yonder in the north,
In the Thaebaek Mountain Range,
At the foot of Mount Jiri,
At the foot of Mount Halla
On Jeju Island in the south

Far beyond the sea,
Azaleas bloom.
In the cold and in the warm season
Everywhere on the hills and in the fields of the north and south
Pink azaleas bloom,
Striking roots deep
In the soil of the motherland.
And it wishes only one thing–national reunification.
Pink azaleas are evocative of
My steady love for my unforgettable beloved.
Do you know how much
I think of azaleas?

The First Interviewer

The waves of the July resistance in 1987 swept the whole of south Korea, but the news of it did not reach us, shut in behind high walls. But the symptoms of unseen change appeared one after another.

One day the governor of the prison summoned me. He hailed from Hamgyong Province, as I did. His attitude toward me was mild as never before and he addressed me sympathetically. I listened to him, thinking, "What scheme has he dreamt up this time?"

He said, "There are Christians who sympathize with prisoners coming from the north, like you, who have no visitors. They want to help them, and will be allowed to meet you in a few days' time."

Missionaries from a certain church in Seoul were active at the Chongju Protective Custody House from 1979. The adminstration allowed them to meet only the converted prisoners for six or seven years.

But around 1987 the administration allowed them to meet an unconverted prisoner, and at some time later he converted and was released. He was perhaps the last prisoner to convert. The administration, suspecting that his resolve was weakening, allowed the missionaries to meet

him. When he did convert, the authorities thought that the Christians had played a major role, and encouraged them to contact other unconverted prisoners as well.

Is it possible for people who did not yield to all kinds of torture and beatings for over 30 years in prison to decide to convert because some strangers come to visit them and tell them something? Because the intention of the administration was evident, however, we were on the alert.

Later the administration seemed to have first allowed unconverted prisoner So Jun Sik to meet the Christians. He appeared to have also been on the alert. He treated them coldly at first. When they visited him again, he met them and was said to have told them about other comrades who had no family, nor anyone to depend on, taking them as kind and conscientious people. He perhaps told them about me.

Several days after I met the chief prison officer, the jailor called me out and I followed him. He said I would meet people from the outside. At the moment I was seized with a strange forebearing. I had been confined in prison for 22 years and in the protective custody house for 11 years, but no one had ever visited me. I had no chance to meet people from the outside with the exception of jailors, public procurators and minor offenders. On the way to the reception room, I was seized with expectation and a sense of alertness.

Entering the reception room, I found the wife of the pastor of the Kungjong Church in Seoul and a young female missionary who seemed to be in her twenties waiting for me.

Pak Hong Ja impressed me as honest. When I sat down, she began to speak, "We strive to help those who are in prison, as Christ teaches us. We sincerely sympathize with those unconverted prisoners who are suffering the hardships of imprisonment for no other reason but their faith."

If, like other Christians, they had told me to repent and give my life to Christ, I would have left the room without listening to another word. But I felt that they sincerely wanted to understand me, and that day I talked with both of them about different matters. I told them about my mother, whom I had left behind in the north, that whenever I felt confined by the hardships of prison life I tried to endure by composing songs, and that I by no means repented my past career. Missionary Ri Mi Sun said, "When public atmosphere thaws and you are released from the protective custody house, I will do my best to help you so that you will do well in society. So don't worry."

While believing them and talking with them, I did not relax my vigi-

lance. Even supposing they came without such a purpose, the administration of the protective custody house allowed them to meet me because the administrators wanted me to convert, didn't they?

During the talk I wanted to probe their intentions and flung a captious question at them.

"Why do you not preach conversion? I think the authorities' aim is to convert me...."

Both women gazed at me and replied calmly, "We did not come at the request of the authorities but by God's wish. Man must keep his true worth–such is the Christian doctrine. What is the use of preaching conversion to a man who is undergoing suffering because of his faith?"

When the interview ended, they rose and asked cautiously, "If we visit again, will you meet with us?"

"Yes " I said.

They visited me three or four times more before I was released in October of 1988. Once they made me smile, saying, "Now that we have made friends with each other, we have been infected." This was a new revelation to me – the true conscience or common human nature that induced Christians and communists to make friends. This awareness was a satisfactory and precious thing I kept in my mind during my confinement in the cold cell. Each time they called on me, they were lavish in their gifts to me – money, food and fruit. They sincerely sympathized with me, learning that I had been hungry each day for 34 years. My relations with them continued even after my release from prison. They helped me and I learned much from them. I will refer to both of them again later.

We too learned that in the second half of 1987 the trend towards democracy in society became stronger. Under the changing situation, we strengthened our unity and had different improvement measures taken. First of all, the guards removed the lower lock of the two locks to the cells. Some may ask what is the difference between being trapped behind one lock or two locks? In addition to the physical confinement in the cell, the locks also caused great psychological pressure. Each key was different from the next. There were 22 cells with two locks each. This meant the jailor had 44 keys. When inmates were released to the yard for physical exercise or returned from outside, the jailor had to take time to find the keys to the locks to each cell, searching through so many keys. Even one minute of sunlight was precious to us, so we regretted the lost time.

After 1988, the hour of physical exercise was always observed and the inmates were allowed to have up to five books. But till October of 1988, when I was released, all publications carrying news were banned.

The administration of the protective custody block made great efforts to prevent news from reaching us. One of the inmates read the journal *Umak Tong-A* published by the *Tong-A* newspaper company. When I got a look at it, I often saw ads for *Sin Tong-A*, its sister publication. Of course, only a few highlights were printed, but they offered precious information to us. There is no knowing whether the administration of the protective custody block learned that we carefully read the advertisements in *Sin Tong-A* or censored each page of *Umak Tong-A*, but later we were given the journal with the advertisements blacked out. The administrators seemed to have believed they could maintain order only by isolating us from news of the outside world.

In spite of their efforts, the trend of democracy, caused by the June resistance, vehemently lashed the walls of the protective custody block, when Comrade So Jun Sik, unconverted prisoner No.1, was released despite the "Public Security Act", which said "He who does not convert shall never see the light of day." After his release, So rushed across the country to publicize the brutality of the "Public Security Act" and the misery of inmates at the Chongju Protective Custody House, true to the will of the comrades who had said, "If only one of our comrades remains alive, he will tell the truth. The people and history will never be silent."

Owing to his efforts, our existence became known to the public.

In October, of 1988, members of a State Policy Inspection Group comprised of assemblymen visited the protective custody house.

Prior to this the prison was inspected by such high-ranking officials as the Minister of Justice. The rules of the protective custody block stipulate that those placed under surveillance were to be informed of upcoming inspections, because inspections offered opportunities for those under surveillance to tell their demands.

But the rule was not observed at all. When they rushed about the block cleaning, we guessed that someone was expected and prepared demands for the treatment to be improved. However, what demands could we make when the inspector hastily made a round of the ward, without speaking a single word?

Hearing the news of the expected visit of the State Policy Inspection Group, we pinned some hopes on this opportunity. We thought that, although it has been made up from representatives of the government and opposition parties, it would be better than actually government officials. But when we met with them, we found no differences between them. The State Policy Inspection Group interview with our representatives should have been arranged at least. But the assemblymen separately made a round of the ward and conducted their "inspection" tossing a word or two

at us through the bars. They spoke to the inmates in front of one cell, and before the inmates could respond, they moved toward another cell.

Moreover, some assemblymen were little concerned with investigating how the protective custody block violated our human rights and more interested in the question "Why have you not converted?", which approximated censure. Unable to endure any more, one comrade protested, saying, "We have our ideology. Why do you try to find falut with our ideology? You should investigate why we should suffer violations of our human rights." Later I learned that the conservative newspapers, distorting this remark, characterized the "dry and heartless Reds in the protective custody block" as hardly savable bigots.

In spite of such wicked propaganda, at the Harvest Moon Festival, opposition party leader Kim Dae Jung sent each of us money for ricecakes – 20,000 *won*. It was the first act of kindness we received.

Under these circumstances, many comrades presumed that their confinement in the protective custody block would soon end. They said that the government could not preserve the "Public Security Act" even to keep up its prestige.

Even the public procurator who came down every three months said in an interview with us, "Change the title from a written declaration of conversion, cross out the word conversion and simply write 'I will live in harmony with my family abiding by State laws', and then you will be released."

Did they believe it was only the word "conversion" that had stopped us from signing a written declaration of conversion for so long? No one acceded to the "revised proposal" of the public procurator. Nevertheless, the attitude of the public procurator definitely showed that the situation was changing.

The situation clearly showed that the presumption of the comrades was convincing, but, strangely enough, such analysis did not satisfy me. I underwent over tens of years of imprisonment and two years in the protective custody block. To me this was nothing if I had to surrender my will. In these years, my prison term was prolonged six times, so the thought that the gate of the prison was shut forever seemed to have been cut deep into my heart, in spite of myself.

1590 Years of Imprisonment

I sat in prison having not the slightest hope of being released. On October 27, 1988, the gates of the prison opened for me without notice,

as suddenly as I was thrown into it.

Confinement in prison, which began for me at the age of 36, ended at the age of 62. I ommit the description of my feelings of that time because I gave a detailed account of it above. When police detectives took me in a car to the Salvation Army's old folks' home, thousands of feelings crowded my mind and I recited a song, which I cite here.

Coming Out Of the Prison Gate

There is a saying,
"Sunlight will enter the rathole someday."
Really, has sunlight entered the rathole?
The gate of this place is open to the imprisoned
No gate was open to those going out.
But the gate is open for me to go out.
What has happened?

Have the brothers and sisters
At loggerheads with each other in a divided country
Changed their minds?
Or has the world gone mad?
Has peace come
Which looks like a beautiful girl
Casting a simple smile?

A sudden flood of sunlight
Blinds my eyes in darkness.
Don't bother me please,
Let me follow my thoughts for a moment.

The long, long night has passed,
The fragrant smell of social soil dizzies me.
Let me rest here,
My motherland, my brothers and sisters.

All the comrades who remained in the protective custody block after my release were released by May of 1989. The Chongju Protective Custody House, which cost many comrades their blood and sweat, at last closed its doors.

According to the calculation of one comrade, the total number years

of imprisonment by our 51 comrades in the protective custody block is said to amount to 1590, that is, an average of 29 years. Hearing of this, I wept bitter tears.

How many comrades used their final breath at the gallows or at the execution site to shout "Long live General Kim Il Sung!", "Long live national reunification!" How many comrades died in secret tortured, starved, or frozen in the prison? How many comrades adhered to their principles, committing suicide like Comrade Ko Jin Hui!

My ears rang with the voices of fallen comrades who had said with their dying breath, "Comrades, please fight, taking my share upon yourselves. If anyone of you survives, make the truth known to the people and to history."

If those years lost by our deceased comrades are added, the total years of imprisonment would far exceed 1590 years.

I, too, passed the prime years of my life in the darkness of prison.

They stole the most precious part of my life and released me, invalid and old.

I was thrown out to the unfamiliar world, tormented and torn, nearly fainting in the sunlight. But so long as my blood coursed through my veins, my heart beat in my chest and my memories held fast, I would work to call up the spirits of our deceased comrades, who numbered several hundred times those who were released from prison. Rather than being proud and happy in having defended my beliefs during 34 years of imprisonment, I was heavy of mind and spirit, anxious to convey the appealing voices engraved in my memory before that memory faded away.

I truly felt that on the shoulders of this old man lay the burden of winning back and reviving 1590 years of imprisonment and several thousand lost lives.

Precisely in this lies the meaning of my life of surviving 34 years of imprisonment. This thought filled my mind as I stepped through the prison gates.

9. A SURVIVOR

Prison Gates Opened after 34 Years

Let me give a more detailed account of my feelings at the time of my release from custody.

On the 27th of October, 1988, the door of cell No. 18 in ward No. 3 of the Chongju Protective Custody House, where I had been confined, was thrown abruptly open in the early hours of dawn.

"No. 94, come out! It's time to check the cell," the jailor shouted.

I was immediately ushered into the office of the instruction section chief. Words that seemed to come through the haze of a dream fell from his lips. I was to be released from the Chongju Protective Custody House that day. He said that the protective custody sentence under the "Public Security Act" had been commuted to "limitation of residence".

I was shocked at the news. I had been under protective custody for 12 years in Chongju. I had been in prison for 34 years, if the period of my previous imprisonment is added. Of course, when Comrade So Jun Sik was released while still an unconverted prisoner on the 25th of May that year, some comrades had harbored the hope that our confinement would not last much longer. But I did not really believe them. Because he was a fellow countryman resident in Japan and campaign for his release continuously attracted world attention, his situation was considerably different from ours. But still the fact remained: I was to be released.

The reality of the situation began to sink in. I looked into the unprecedentedly sincere eyes of the instruction section chief. The shock gradually ebbed as joy filled my heart. At that moment I collected my mind.

I had passed days doing nothing in the prison. Still these were days of struggle. I had no idea why they were releasing me. I had undergone great hardships and steadfastly refused to sign the written declaration of conversion. Still he spoke as if he was doing me a great favour. So I could not leave with thanking him.

I sank in thought, giving no ear to what he was saying and abruptly interrupted his speech.

"Look here, section chief! The spring time of my life has passed during 34 years of imprisonment. My hair has turned gray and the years left

to me are numbered. Now you are trying to send me out into society and make me die there. Is this humanitarian treatment? I will not go out. I will die here."

The expression on the face of the section chief seemed to harden a little and he spoke in an unprecedentedly kind manner, "Understand us. We cannot release those whom we are told to imprison nor imprison those whom we are told to release." He spoke softly, but the preparations to release me were well under way. *Soji* brought the bundle containing my personal belongings and gave me work clothes similar to a military uniform to change into.

"Well, I will go out," I decided. They may set their mind at ease, thinking that I am like an old tree whose days are numbered, hardly having any vigour to fight even if released from prison. I knew their words smacked of hitting one on the back while stroking one's belly. I had already made up my mind. I would continue the struggle to adhere to my faith until my dying day.

After a while, two police investigators came to take me to the rest home designated as my new residence. I followed them and got into the car they had brought. The engine started and the car carried me beyond the prison gates before I knew it.

After so many years, I was finally out of the prison. Frankly speaking, I was very happy. But, on the other hand, the thought came to me; after 34 years behind bars, was I really free of the prison walls?

Sunlight rarely found its way into my prison cell so I found it difficult to open my eyes, dazzled by the sunlight coming in through the car window. Thousands of thoughts crossed my mind.

When will the other comrades be released?... How long yet will they keep me under surveillance on the pretext of "limitation of residence". Would it not be better for me, old and sick and with no family in south Korea, to die rather than to live causing troubles to strangers?... When will I meet my comrades?...

We arrived at the Salvation Army's rest home in Kwachon City, Kyonggi Province in no time at all. Situated at the foot of Mt. Kwanak, the home was surrounded by woods. So the air was clean and the soil smelled fresh. The police investigators took me to the office. A woman with the surname of Ri in her late 20s from the general affairs section met me with a smile.

She asked several questions to the police investigators, such as my name and personal relations and suddenly stared in wonder. She seemed to have been told an old man released from Chongju Protective Custody House would arrive, but finally meeting him, she was surprised. I

had no family register nor resident registration number, although the old people arriving at the home commonly had no home nor relatives.

After going through some procedures, the girl showed me to a room. Several one-story houses stood in the woods some hundred metres away from the office.

From the entrance hall, a corridor led straight ahead, with rooms along the left wall. My room was in the middle of the corridor.

She told me where the dining room and wash room were and said, "Please take a good rest till mealtime," before she left. Sunddenly I felt that my strength was gone and, leaning on the wall, I looked toward the distant mountains. Then I looked at the door to the room. I stood up abruptly and stepped out into the corridor, opening the door.

"The door is open! I came out, opening the door with my hand..." I inwardly cried. I did not think that they had locked the door, but when I stepped out of the room, opening the door with my own hand after 34 years behind locked doors, I was seized with such strong emotions that my body trembled. Luckily, no one was around. If someone had seen me, they might have thought the new arrival was a mad man.

Returning to my room, I thought about my situation. I was by no means a free man. Because I was still under the "limitation of residence" by the "Public Security Act". My sentence of protective custody had only been commuted to "limitation of residence".

I was not allowed to leave the administrative district designated for my residence without permission. If I wanted to do so, I had to report to the local police station and get permission and report my arrival to the police station in the administrative district I was visiting. I had to do the same after returning. In addition, once every three months I had to report to the police station my activities during that period: whom I met, where I had been and what I did. Of course I could not move to another place at my own discretion. I was deprived of all freedoms. Because, they said, I was "liable to commit offences again". Actually the visible bars and locks were only replaced with invisible chains.

I sat down and closed my eyes. My head seemed to clear and in my mind's eye I pictured a woman's face. She wore a traditional Korean jacket and had her hair done up. It was difficult to judge by her expression whether she smiled or weeping... Mother. Yes, it was my mother. In July of 1950 she saw her son off to the front with exactly this expression. She could not let her son see her tears, but she couldn't bring herself to smile.

By now mother must have passed away. Exhausted by waiting for her unfilial son, she had closed her eyes.

"Oh dear mother! This son could not observe your sixtieth birthday or

attend you on your death's bed. My hair now gray and sixty two years old, I have left the prison gates. Oh, will the day ever come when I can visit my mother's grave and mourn her pounding the earth?"

At the thought of it, a lump came to my throat. I was convinced the day would definitely come when our nation is reunified, when I will be able to visit the grave of my mother. But I was a hypertensive and in the twilight of my life and could fall into precarious state of health any day. Not only I, but also many of the comrades who had been confined for many years suffer from hypertension. Hypertension in our cases was caused by a lack of activity, and mental stress due to protracted confinement.

"If I have a stroke and become paralyzed on one side of my body..." The thought that had seized me in the car in the morning again occurred to me. "It would be right to die rather than to become a burden to strangers and belittle myself. I must find something to give purpose to my remaining days," I thought.

I noticed a pen lying on the desk in the corner of my room. I grabbed it quickly fearing it was left by mistake.

In the prison, we were not allowed to keep any writing instruments. At most, if a prisoner wants to write a letter, he is allowed to use a pen only for a few moments. As I had no relatives in south Korea, I had no one to write a letter to. So, for 34 years of confinement, I had not so much as touched a pen.

What would I had done if I had had a pen? Of course, I would not have written a diary or biography, there was no meaning in doing so. However, I wanted to record the heroic deeds of my many comrades which I covered and witnessed as a war correspondent.

During 34 years of imprisonment, day and night I recalled what I observed and heard on Mount Jiri, lest the memories fade. In the early period of confinement in the protective custody block, three inmates were placed for a short time in one cell. At that time, a young man with an extraordinary memory was in my cell. I told him about the history of the guerrillas on Mount Jiri and asked him to remember their deeds, because I could not put faith in my aging memory. About a week later I asked him again and found that he had forgot to tell all the names of the places and men. Was it because he had not directly experienced the events? I was obliged to give up the thought of relying on the young comrade and again refreshed and strengthened my memories. Some time later, a comrade died of disease. He, a young man, passed away before me, an old man. How fickle human fate is!

Fingering the pen, I made up my mind to record my memories as

quickly as possible. I came to think of it as the last duty of a war correspondent of the People's Army to write about the youth, struggle and patriotism of the comrades who fell in action on the mountains, shouting "Long live national reunification!", and convey their story to posterity.

While I was deep in thought, sitting in the room, evening fell around me.

Three old men whom I was to share my room with entered one by one. One was dumb, another had only one daughter whose family was poor, and the other seemed to be a loafing idler. On entering the room, the latter cast a sidelong glance at me, a newcomer, and plumped down on the floor without even saying a word of greeting. He began to shuffle a deck of Korean playing cards. None seemed to welcome me as their roommate. I, too, was ill at ease. And so passed my first day of freedom from the prison walls.

Boiled Glutinous Rice Tasted for the First Time

I had a restless night. The next day Pak Hong Ja, the wife of the pastor of the Kungjong Church, and the missionery Ri Mi Sun unexpectedly visited me. I was very glad. They brought me new clothing: underwear, shirt, trousers and a jacket. They also gave me a belt and a watch they had bought for me. I could at last take off the military-like working clothes from the protective custody block and changed into civilian clothes. I clumsily put on the belt and watch and felt tears come to my eyes. Mrs. Pak Hong Ja looked around my room, spoke to the girl from the general affairs section and then suggested I go with her. She said she had a meal prepared for me at her home.

Going out with both of them, I found a car belonging to the church waiting for us in front of the gate. Knowing I had trouble with my legs, they did not want me to walk. We drove to the parsonage.

When we entered the house, the pastor greeted us happily. Entering the hall, I felt somewhat strange. How long since I had been in a regular home, with quaint little rooms and the smell of home-cooking wafting from the kitchen.

This was the first since I had bidden farewell to my mother, wife and a child at my home in Hungnam in July of 1950 that I had set foot in a proper home. In my mind I pictured my mother seeing me off and my wife setting the table with green pepper and bean paste on my last day.

After a while the wife of the pastor and the missionary brought in a

table laid with the meal. The wife of the pastor had prepared many tasty dishes. She seemed to be sorry for me, knowing my hunger had been fended with only lump of boiled barley for over 30 years. If I tried to expand on how tasty these dishes were, you might think that I was an obnormal old man. But if you consider that I was treated to such a meal in the warm inner room of a home for the first time in the 40 years since I left my own home, you will perhaps understand, if only a little, my feelings at that moment.

From among the many dishes, the boiled glutinous rice mixed with sugar, dates, chestnuts, pine-nuts, and sesame oil was particularly tasty. I had never tasted boiled glutinous rice before. When I said so, the wife of the pastor said, "Don't people in South Hamgyong Province eat boiled glutinous rice?" Although this was not the case in general, I had never tasted it because, under Japanese rule, my uncle, who brought me up, led a decent life although he was rich, saying, "How can we have delicacies while our neighbours cannot eat even barnyard millet gruel?" After liberation I was too busy to eat such dish. In south Korea I had no opportunity to taste it because I was in prison.

The wife of the pastor gave me a package of boiled glutinous rice to take with me. Later, whenever I visited the Kungjong Church, I was treated to boiled glutinous rice.

When we drank tea after the meal, the pastor began to speak cautiously, "You have suffered a great deal. How about embracing Christianity and entrusting your future to God?"

It was a natural proposal for him, the pastor, but it was difficult for me to reply and I simply smiled. I had not converted during the hardships of prison. Had I waited only to embrace Christianity? That did not make sense. I wondered if it meant a new "conversion" for me. Mrs. Pak perhaps guessed my feeling and dissuaded her husband, "Not now."

At this the pastor smiled and said, "Of course, you're right."

The pastor and his wife never again suggested I embrace Christianity. I was really grateful to the pastor and his wife and the missionary Ri for helping me. They proceeded from my standpoint, not from their own standpoint.

The Last Duty of a War Correspondent of the Korean People's Army

Life in the rest home was very difficult. I always felt uneasy, not because I was hungry or trembled from cold. It was partly because I was

unsocial, but basically because life in the home was very different from the community life I led with my comrades.

The basic problems of food, clothing and housing were solved, but life was by no means affluent. So the residents seemed to become more avaricious and ill-tempered. Roommates often fought over a package of cakes. Of course, there were times when it was difficult to taste cakes, but at that time charity groups brought us gifts often, even visiting twice a day on Christmas and New Year's Day. So snacks were rather plentiful. Old people, nevertheless, quarreled with each other to get even one more package to stash in their clothes chest.

Their attitude towards life differed diametrically from that of our comrades. In prison our comrades, allayed hunger with four spoonfuls of boiled barley, waited a whole week to pass a package of bread to their comrades, evading strict watch. In the home, people who were inconsiderate to each other lived in the same room, sleeping under the same quilt. I began to think this could be the hell spoken of in Buddhism.

When quarrels between residents became serious, the girl from the general affairs section came to admonish and reproach them. When, nevertheless, they did not stop quarreling, she moved them to separate rooms. At these times I was ashamed to see her, as I wanted to live without causing trouble. So even when someone said something unpleasant, I did not respond. I shared the articles of comfort I received and the snacks Mrs. Pak brought with the residents in my room.

Sometime later I learned that I had earned the neckname "new foolish old man" among the residents of the rest home. They seemed to consider me fool because I did not respond to any criticism and gave my share of food to the others. The girl with the general affairs section seemed to have guessed my way of life. She showed me special kindness, unbeknown to the others. When a rare telephone call came for me, she came to me with a cellular phone so that I could speak from my room, although it was only one hundred metres to the office. There were over one hundred residents in the home, so when telephone calls came, the residents usually were not told about it unless it was an urgent matter. Otherwise, messages were conveyed to the resident concerned. Later I learned from comrades in other rest homes that if telephone calls came they were often not told, let alone allowed to answer.

When I saw the old people fighting over sweets, i missed my comrades all the more. Sometimes, Comrade So Jun Sik came and conveyed the tidings of the comrades remaining in the protective custody block. The older comrades were being released by one's or two's, and those without families or relatives were being sent to rest homes across the

country. Like in the days at the protective custody block, Comrade So busied himself creating conditions for looking after those of us who were about the age of his parents. He was born in Japan at about the time we were thrown into prison and now had become a young man in his twenties. Visiting the motherland, he met us in the most out-of-the-way place in this land and at last became like-minded with us. This thought awakens recollections.

The old roommates rarely stayed in the room in the daytime. They all seemed to go about to see something or to do something. This provided me with a quiet environment for reading, which I longed for. But when I sat to read, many faces sprang from between the lines. Many sons and daughters of the motherland died in the mountains, in prison and in the protective custody block shouting "Long live national reunification!" How could I forget them?

On my first day in the rest home, I had decided to leave a record of these heroes. I only failed to put my decision into effect because conditions did not allow me. The day which made me realize that I could not defer it any longer came when I saw books and a TV series that insulted the comrades with whom I had fought on Mount Jiri.

I trembled with resentment, reading the book *Southern Army* and watching the telecast version of the novel *Mount Jiri* written by Ri Pyong Ju.

Sons and daughters of the motherland now rest in the soil at the foot of Mount Jiri. They shouted "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" "Long live the Democratic People's Republic of Korea", falling to the bullets of the enemy. The writers who had not been on Mount Jiri and the betrayers of the guerrillas on the mountain trifled their shouts. I cannot be silent anymore. I am 72 years old. In the twilight of my life, I should tell to the world how they fought in defence of their beliefs in spite of the torture of executioners. This is the last duty of the war correspondent of the People's Army. Did I not survive to fulfil this sole duty to the last?

Making this decision, I once again retraced the memory of past days. I sorely missed the comrades who left me. Thinking of the golden-bell flowering by the building of the protective custody block where my comrades died, I wrote a song dedicated to their memory.

Song of Golden-Bell

Under high walls
Like sheer cliffs
Where even birds do not fly
There blooms a golden-bell.

To whom do you smile benignly?
In the depth of winter in cold wind
The golden-bell sprawls gloomily,
Sheltering its flower in capsule.
Does it fear that it might freeze from cold?
It dreams spring dreams.
Warm spring sunlight has come,
And it awakens from wakeful winter sleep
And begins to suck up spring sap.
Puts out sharp flower buds,
And yellow flowers come out in full bloom.

Has it come out in yellow flowers
Taking a fancy to the yellow color
Of yellow jacket of pretty-faced brides?
In the divided motherland
Full of sorrow and sadness
Separated brothers and sisters shed tears
Missing each other.
Our hearts burned
With flame of struggle for reunification,
Alas! Our faces lost colour and have paled
To the yellow color
From dampness and darkness
In the dark and narrow cell
Where a spot of sunlight is not seen.
Has it come out in yellow bloom
Reflecting the fighting spirit
Of the yellow-faced comrades?

In spring on the hills and in the fields
Of the beautiful motherland,
And by the rusty barbed wire entanglement
Yellow golden-bells bloom
And call: Butterfly, yellow butterfly,
Resembling my colour,
Fly across the barrier
Where bayonets glisten
To the north, to our brothers!
Kiss them and fly to us,
And kiss the graves

Where our brothers rest,
Before the honey on the lips dries up.

From then on, taking advantage of outings made by the residents every day, I wrote down my recollections. In addition to the guerrilla struggle on Mount Jiri, I included in my memoirs the anti-Japanese struggle under the Japanese rule that I witnessed and the cruel environment in which the Left-wing champions were placed after the 1950s. When I finally sat down to write, I found my memories of many things were obscure. Therefore, I first wrote down the events of which I had a clear memory.

How good it would have been if I could have written all that I wanted to write! But I had to write evading others' eyes because I was watched under the plea of "limitation of residence" as a "Red" who refused conversion. So long as those who wanted to isolate us from society forever held the seat of authority, it was necessary to hide the writing of the manuscript till the publication of the memoirs.

In the evening, when my roommates returned from their outing, I closed my eyes and refreshed my memories of the past. In the daytime, when they went out and I was alone, I put down my recollections on paper. Even in the daytime, there were instances in which residents from other rooms unexpectedly opened my door and entered the room or officials from the rest home dropped in, so my writing proceeded very slowly. The girl with the general affairs section and a nurse kindly looked after me. The nurse more than once admonished me and suggested I stop smoking because it was harmful to someone with high blood pressure. I never thought that they were watching me. But I thought it better not to make anyone aware that I was writing a manuscript. Going on writing, I used to notice belatedly that some happenings were omitted. I thought it better to complete the rough outline above all and keep it safe, replenishing it at odd moments. So I hurried with the completion of the rough draft.

I was 72 years old and my health was utterly destroyed, so it was impossible to foresee when I would fall. In addition, it was difficult to foresee when I would again be thrown into prison by the "Observation and Security Act". I was solely occupied with the thought that I had to fulfil my last duty as a war correspondent of the Korean People's Army.

An Unsent Letter

Time passed unnoticed and New Year came. On New Year's Day we ate rice-cake soup and watched a TV program that explained how to set

things on the table for sacrificial services. How could I not miss my birthplace?

My mother was born in 1900, so if she was alive, she would be 90 years old. But it was difficult to hope that she was still alive. She, a young widow, spent prime of her life undernourished and overworked. A daughter-in-law and a granddaughter allowed her to taste the joys of life for a short time. But then she lost her son. I can only imagine what mental pains she must have suffered.

Although I was now free of the prison gates, I could not once bow low in front of the sacrificial table in memory of my late mother. On the morning of New Year's Day I missed my mother and wrote a letter addressed to her. I wrote a letter but could not send it. Even if I had sent it, there was no one alive to receive it.

I knew that I wrote in vain, but it seemed to me that I could not behave otherwise. I could not send the letter, but I kept it with me because it was my soul dedicated to my mother.

Several days later Mrs. Pak Hong Ja and the missionary Ri Mi Sun visited me, bringing with them a big bundle of holiday treats. They seemed to have seen my letter lying on the small dining table I used as a writing desk.

"Isn't there any way to send this letter to your birthplace?"

"I have no hope of sending it."

I simply laughed, but they insisted on taking it.

Some time later word came from the women that "the letter cannot be directly sent to your birthplace. But if it is put in a newspaper or magazine, people in your birthplace may possibly read it." Even if people in my birthplace cannot read my letter, it is necessary to give wide publicity to the fact that there are people like me, they said. I agreed with them but I wondered whether there was a newspaper or magazine that would carry the dangerous letter.

Several days later word came that arrangement had been made to put it in the monthly *Mal*. *Mal* was said to be a journal edited by journalists who had been dismissed for writing the truth. This journal was said to represent just public opinion. I had no knowledge of *Mal*. The protective custody block did not allow us to read even comments on current affairs published by the conservative newspapers. Therefore, it was natural that I did not know the existence of the opposition publication. The thought came to me that it was a bold press, considering that it decided to carry the letter.

About one month passed. In early Mach of 1989, I think, a letter came to me. It had been a lifetime since I had received a letter. I looked at the

envelope with curiosity. The letter was from the journalist Sin Jun Yong with *Mal* . In her letter, she said that my letter would be carried in *Mal* No. 4 for 1989 and that she would visit me bringing a copy and payment after its publication.

I was more interested in the true press of this country and in the energetic young journalist working with it than the fact that my letter was printed. I sent a reply saying, "I will wait."

Young Female Journalist Sin Jun Yong

Toward the end of March of 1989, the journalist Sin called on me. Considering the name and handwriting of the sender of the letter, I supposed that the journalist was a young man. Contrary to my expectation, the journalist was a very young woman. A small woman, she arrived toting a very large bundle, which aroused my interest. In it were all the past issues of the magazine, from the first to the last.

"You have not read newspapers for a long time, I suppose. I have brought all of our issues, thinking that if you looked through them, it would help you in understanding the current situation."

"How did you carry such a heavy load?"

"I took the trouble, supposing that you still do not know about our magazine, and thinking that if you read and judge it, you will better understand it."

Sin was somewhat distinguished from the persons whom I met after being released from prison. She was comparatively well acquainted with our modern history, the "Public Security Act", life in prison and other topics. In reply to my question "How do you know so much about us?" she attributed it to the student movement she took part in while attending university. According to her, in the 1980s the numbers of students taking part in the student movement greatly increased and many of them organized demonstrations and were thrown into prison, where they heard much about the unconverted long-term prisoners. They were indignant over the suppression of the unconverted long-term prisoners.

Listening to her, I was moved by the fact that when we were imprisoned, bound hand and foot, the younger generation has grown up on this land in such a sturdy fashion.

Sin undid another bundle and gave me a thousand sheets of paper and a dozen ball-point pens.

"You originally came to the south, assuming the duty of a journalist,

but failed to fulfil it, being thrown into prison. I have brought pens and paper, thinking now is the time for you to complete the articles you failed to write. I think it best for you to write the detailed account of the turmoil you went through in order to fill gaps in history. You might publish it right away, or wait to have it published."

This remark had a great impact upon me.

Her words greatly encouraged me to reveal the truth about the guerrillas on Mount Jiri that was currently buried under the fabrication of "anti-communism".

Among the tens of thousands of Left-wing champions immediately after the war, the 51 comrades who remained in the protective custody block to the last were the sole survivors in their activities. Writing each line, I pledged that my duty as a survivor was to testify to the truth of the comrades who died, crying, "If one of us survives, let him testify to the truth of history", or who did not manage to leave their will before their bones were buried on Mount Jiri. Hearing the words expressing the same thought as mine from the lips of the representative of the younger generation who grew up in the eighties, I thought, "This is a requirement of history and of our times." I was grateful to her for her remarks, which reaffirmed in me the drive to write and grateful for the paper she brought.

"There is one procedure to go through," She said, producing a white envelope and a blank receipt. It was the author's fee for the letter I wrote, she said. When I declined it, she said, "If you don't take it now, I will mail it to you." So I took it. As she told me to seal the receipt with the thumb because it should be tendered to the company, I did so. As she was writing my name and address, she suddenly began to laugh.

"You don't have a resident registration number, do you?"

When I accepted payment, I had to pay tax. While filling in the blank for tax payment she suddenly realized, "How can a tax be levied on the person who has no resident registration number and is not recorded in the census registration" and laughed.

As I watched Sin walk lively away, shouldering a bag, my young days in Hungnam when I ran about day and night, absorbed in my work, returned to me. The prime of my life was gone, but at the thought of the younger generation growing up in the motherland, I felt warmth in my heart.

I must say a few words about the journalist Sin Jun Yong.

She was born in 1963 and graduated in Politics and Diplomacy from Yonsei University. She was a great help in the publication of the original *Note of the Former War Correspondent of the People's Army* in serial form

in the magazine *Mal* and later wrote the book *Ri In Mo* on the basis of my manuscript and interview materials.

She was a representative of the new generation, which sincerely sympathized with my situation and painfully experienced the tragedy of the division of the nation, which produced the unconverted long-term prisoner Ri In Mo who lived with fortitude for over 40 years in separation from his family.

Associating with Sin, I began to feel as if she were my real daughter. When I parted from her, I was anxious to give her something as a gift. She wrote about it, "I felt strange whenever I found simple feelings in one whose whole life was run through with resentment and struggle like in old rural people." But how can my feelings toward her be equated with those of old people in the countryside?

It seemed to me that I saw in her the traits of other laudable and proud young people in this country.

Each time I met with her, I was reminded for some reason of ardent young people like martyrs Jo Song Man who killed himself falling from the roof of the school house at Seoul Myongdong Cathedral, shouting "Let all the political offenders be released immediately! Let the Olympic Games be held jointly by the south and the north! Let the US army be withdrawn!" It is perhaps because I felt that the feelings of justice, conscience and ardent love of the nation pulsating in the hearts of these martyrs had something in common with those of Young Miss Sin, the journalist.

By making my existence known to the world, Sin Jun Yong not only awoke the public to the sorrow of the divided country, but also sent a letter to the International Red Cross calling for my repatriation to the north. She showed special concern for my repatriation.

It is no exaggeration to say that my life after my release from prison was inseparably linked with Sin Jun Yong.

After meeting her, I avidly read the back issues of *Mal* . Its appearance was rough, but its contents seemed to be substantial. Particularly it pleased me that most of the items were written in plain words so that the broad masses of readers could understand them. I believe the press must be accessible to the masses.

About 300 metres from the rest home was a highway. Alongside was a bookshop. Everyday I looked at the books. Of course, I seldom bought books, but the owner was kind and did not treat me badly.

After becoming acquainted with the magazine *Mal* , I noticed it was on sale at the store. When I asked him whether it sold well, he said that it was a bestseller.

I became an avid reader of *Mal* . Sin sent me the magazine free of charge, for which I was grateful.

"Observation and Security Act" Instead of "Public Security Act"

A very auspicious event took place on May 6, 1989. Comrade So Jun Sik got married. The bride was more than ten years younger than him. She looked slender and had bright eyes. She took an active part in the student movement at her university. I keenly felt once again that the new generation was growing up vigorously. I wished them a happy life, teaching and learning from each other.

At the wedding, I was very glad to meet the comrades I had longed to see. Imagine this gaggle of gray-haired old people rejoicing like children, hugging each other, dressed in simple jackets: they had no proper suits to wear. We were beside ourselves with joy, unmindful of how other guests would view us. I learned that some comrades failed to come to the wedding because the police investigators in charge of them did not allow them to do so. I was saddened by the thought of those who surely had not slept a moment in anticipation of congratulating Comrade So on his wedding day and meeting comrades after a long separation, now lying in resentment in their beds, rest homes or in their houses.

In May of that year the "Public Security Act" was repealed. However, on the 16th of June a new law called the "Observation and Security Act" was enforced instead. The article on protective custody in the "Public Security Act" by which people were sentenced to imprisonment in the protective custody block was abolished and only observation and security and "limitation of residence" remained. At first glance, surveillance seemed to be loosened, but in fact this was not so. Those of us subjected to surveillance under the "Public Security Act and "limitation of residence" were duty bound to make frequent detailed reports about our lives. There was added an article that provided for those who did not fulfil this duty to be sent to prison.

According to the act, I could go nowhere and meet no one without permission of the police investigator in charge of my case and must go running to him when he summons me and live in the place designated by him. Anyone who violates any of these provisions would be sentenced to up to two years in jail. Such were the term of the "Observation and Security Act", which was newly proclaimed.

In November of that year, I experienced the "strength" of this act. At

that time, Mingahyop (Families Council for the Realization of Democracy) arranged a meeting to welcome those who were released from prison under the "Public Security Act". Early on the morning of the meeting, police investigators came to the rest home and prohibited us from attending the meeting. Young police investigators violently held us back, and we could not leave. I had to sit in my room all day long. Later I learned that only six persons attended the meeting and that these were all arrested by the police on their way home. There were comrades against whom criminal actions were brought. Among these was Choe Nam Gyu, age 78, a professor of geography, who was respected by our comrades for his scholary achievements and personality. He was stripped naked and subjected to torture in the underground room of the police station.

Close Friendships between Christians and a Communist

The following happened on the tenth of October in 1989. In south Korea, I said that my birthday was the tenth of October. I have already mentioned why I told this lie. That day was a day that deepened my consciousness as a member of the Workers' Party of Korea. That day, too, I was recalling the days in Phungsan when Mrs. Pak said that she laid a table in honour of my birthday in her home. At this I realized that it was "my birthday". Imagine my feeling when I found a birthday table laid for me in Seoul, in south Korea, where I had no relatives. Missionary Ri, too, was always kind to me, calling me "grandfather". And she was dear to me like my own granddaughter would have been and I was in such intimate terms with her that I simply called her "Mi Sun". When she took me somewhere, she walked holding my hand lest I fall. Actually, I felt rather embarrassed.

Both constantly showed kindness not only to me but also to those people without family in the rest home with whom they established a friendship. They regularly called on and consoled them. On special days, they invited lonely residents to their home, lest they feel lonely, and often took them to restaurants to treat them to special dishes. All the kindness they showed cannot be mentioned. They did not show kindness once or twice for appearance's sake, but constantly over several years.

They not only devotedly looked after our food and clothing, but both often joked, "While we continuously meet the long-term prisoners, we are much infected." They were most active champions of the movement for the guarantee of human rights for long-term prisoners.

The following happened in the autumn of 1989. At that time the Party

for Peace and Democracy held a lecture about human rights for conscientious prisoners, which Mrs. Pak and the missionary Ri seemed to have attended. At that time the protective custody block was closed and so the question of the release of political offenders confined in Taejon prison was the main issue of concern. Mrs. Pak was friends with Comrade So Sung (So Jun Sik's elder brother was imprisoned with him and was serving an indefinite prison term). She more than once sent a written appeal to the Human Rights Committee of the Party for Peace and Democracy calling for the release of Comrade So. Concerning the issue of the release of Comrade So, there was only the rumour that "He possibly will be released around the Autumn Festival" or "He will be released around Christmas," but it was still couched in mist.

The lecture was a great success and the president of the party, Kim Dae Jung, attended it. After the lecture he descended the platform to leave. Availing herself of the opportunity, Mrs. Pak ran out and blocked President Kim's way.

"Will Mr. So Sung be released or not?"

When an unknown woman unexpectedly obstructed his way and asked about the prisoners of conscience, even the experienced president of the party was somewhat embarrassed.

When I was told the story, I was much surprised. Mrs. Pak was devoted to a quiet religious life, showing no special concern for politics before meeting us. She was not headstrong nor audacious, but always quiet. Hearing that she raised the question of Comrade So, blocking the way of the opposition party leader in sight of so many people, I thought Mrs. Pak, too, had changed.

Once she said with a smile, "I seem to be hated in my neighbourhood."

I wondered what was the matter. She lived in Kungjong-dong, situated beside the Blue House. Once one of the establishments under the Blue House arranged a get-together in which they conducted "Operation Smile" apologizing for inconveniences they caused, to which the inhabitants of the neighbourhood were invited; all but Mrs. Pak. An ordinary man might feel uneasy or at least be worried, but she seemed to have been quite indifferent to this affront.

Mrs. Pak and the missionary Ri were among those whom I most believed in and liked in south Korean society. It might seem dubious to some people how Christians and a communist can be on such intimate terms. Of course, they are devoted Christians who believe only in God. Why then did they look after the "Reds", like me?

They did all they could to look after us, deeply sympathizing with

those of us who were imprisoned, starved and maltreated simply because we had different political beliefs. They ardently hoped that the day would come when people like our comrades could lead a life worthy of men, without being persecuted.

I believe they lived with the firm belief in the aspiration for reunification, that the country and nation must be one, rather than in the philanthropy of Christianity. Therefore, the two Christians helped me and I believed them and maintained close friendships with them.

I believe that when people love man, nation and country, whoever they may be, they can understand each other's feelings and live in harmony. We are one nation. This feeling is the foundation for national reunification.

Looking at Mrs. Pak and the missionary Ri that day, I thought of Rev. Moon Ik Hwan, university student Rim Su Gyong and Father Moon Kyu Hyon, who caused a great sensation at home and abroad at that time.

The Rev. Moon Ik Hwan, adviser to Jonminryon (National Alliance for Democratic Movement) visited Pyongyang from the end of March to the beginning of April 1989 and made a great contribution to bringing the reunification movement in south Korea to a new high. He was prompted by a great love of the nation and the country.

In July of that year, Rim Su Gyong took part in the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students held in Pyongyang as a representative of "Jondaehyop" (the National Council of Student Representatives) and returned crossing the military demarcation line, earning the title "flower of reunification". Father Moon Kyu Hyon, from the Committee of Catholic Priests for the Realization of Justice, risked his life to help Rim Su Gyong to return through Panmunjom. Both embraced the sacred cause of national reunification, keenly feeling that fellow countrymen in the north belonged to the same nation, transcending differences in ideas, ideology and religion.

Are not those who imprisoned these righteous people under the "National Security Act" the most wicked traitors to the nation and the enemies of the nation? At the thought of those who were undergoing sufferings in prison, bound hand and foot by these rascals, the birthday food prepared by Mrs. Pak Hong Ja and the missionary Ri with sincerity stuck in my throat.

The Manuscript for the *Notes of the Former War Correspondent of the People's Army* Completed

Visits from comrades were the happiest events of my stay at the rest home. They, like me, were shackled by the "limitation of residence".

Therefore, they could call on me only after going through a great deal of difficulties. Our meeting was therefore so much more joyous.

We exchanged recollections of our struggles. In the course of this I could refresh the memories that were fading from my mind and wrote them down.

One day, Comrade Kim Pyong Ju, who came from Musan in North Hamgyong Province, called on me from Seoul. We fought together in the guerrilla force on Mount Jiri. He was arrested in 1954, much later than I and served a prison term of ten years. So our meeting was after an interval of nearly forty years. How glad we were! He asked me to leave the rest home and live together with him in his home. I was very grateful, but refused. Because it was evident that he would make his children sleep in the loft and vacate a room for me. He had two sons and two daughters. His house was two-roomed. He barely maintained his existence by physical labour and running a stall. In south Korean society, where "anticommunism" holds sway, bountiful livelihood is hardly accessible to someone who had been a guerrilla. His health seemed to be poor. Nevertheless, he came to take me to his home. I was moved to tears at the constant comradeship in the days of Mount Jiri when we shared a handful of unhulled barley. That is why the revolutionary comradeship formed on the long road of struggle is said to be eternal.

I found such comradeship in all the comrades who called on me. How should I repay their warm love? All I could do was to record the struggles of our comrades.

When I was alone, I devoted almost all my time to this task. It meant a struggle for me. I found the worth of my life in this. Writing these words, I spoke with the comrades who had fallen in action and wept. In this record, I felt as if I stood among the ranks of these comrades.

In late summer, I at last completed the rough draft of the manuscript. When I had finished, I had no time to proofread it. Sentences were rough and the composition was not well knit, but it was a precious gem to me. Because it was a task I sought to fulfil before my death, it presented a problem as to how to preserve it. I decided to entrust it to someone, rather than to keep it myself.

Some time later, when Mrs. Pak and the missionary Ri called on me, I told them about my intention and asked them to keep my manuscript. Seeing the voluminous bundle, both looked surprised.

"When did you write this?"

"Wouldn't it be good to publish this in the magazine and make it known to the public?"

"Then won't it cause harm to Grandfather?"

They argued back and forth.

I handed the manuscript to them, saying, "Let's publish it at some proper time in future."

Some time after, word came from Mrs. Pak that she had shown the manuscript to Sin, who had said that she would have the magazine *Mal* carry it. Thinking that I could believe *Mal,* I said "Well done."

Later my article, under the subtitle *Notes of the Former War Correspondent of the People's Army* was carried in four instalments from issues No. 10 in 1989 to No. 1 in 1990.

Many unexptected happened after the publication of the article in *Mal.* Reading the notes, many people visited me and gave me considerable help. I knew that their considerations were directed, not only to me, but to all the comrades who were active in the story I told. They wanted to see in me those comrades who had died, because they were gone and I had survived.

Many Relations Formed by the "Notes"

As my article was being published in *Mal,* I began to feel the influence of *Mal* was considerable.

In the 1990s, many people visited me. Most were students or members of public organizations. They were mainly young people in charge of editing newspapers in their university and their organization. While talking with them, I found that there were differences in the way they expressed my ideas, and they seemed to take great effort to alter my words. When I said "people..." by habit, they changed it to "the masses..." When I said "national defence army", they altered it to "national army". When I spoke of "...killed comrades", they wrote, "...executed comrades". While altering my words in this way, the young journalists expressed the regrets, "If the words used in north Korea are used, readers may find fault with them, so they should be altered somewhat. I'm sorry."

I knew their difficulties. At such time I said in good humour, "Alter them as you wish so that there is no trouble."

Division seemed to be high, even in the language of south Korea and north Korea. Such practice was more pronounced in the official institutions of the press and information. Many journalists with newspapers, radio and the foreign press visited me. They seemed to have not understood me well. There were instances of seriously distorted information.

At last, word came that Mr. Ri, the author of *Southern Army,* wanted to meet me. I refused and did not meet with him. My anger toward him

had not relented. Novel writers and literary commentators who were active for national literature visited me. They encouraged me to record my experiences.

After forming relations at that time, I owed much to the head of a branch office of *Hangyore Sinmun.* He called on me in the rest home and said, "I did not know that there was a long-term prisoner so near", firmly holding my hand and delighting in seeing me. From the next day, he sent me copies of the newspaper *Hangyore Sinmun.* Some time after, his wife visited me and looked after me in different ways. Later he and his wife often visited me in the rest home, saying, "We live in the same village", and kept me company. I thought again that there were many good people in this society, which I could not have imagined when I was first released from the protective custody block.

Another occurence sticks in my memory. It was the visit of members of the "Democratic Fellow Student Society" of the law college at Yonsei University. Among them there was no female student perhaps because they were graduates from law college. They brought a winter overcoat for me. After graduating from the college, each entered social life, but wanted to meet to promote friendship and do worthwhile things by collecting membership fees. Reading the magazine *Mal,* they decided to visit me. I was grateful and found them admirable, but I could not find words to express my gratitude. They came to me and put the overcoat on me.

I felt awkward and at the same time grateful.

"You are all men. Have you gone to the market to buy the overcoat?" I asked.

"Many of us live away from home. So we not only go to market, but also prepare food for ourselves."

At this remark, they broke into laughter. I thought, why should I regret that the prime of my life had passed, when these sound young people are growing so briskly? Later, at the thought of them, I smiled in spite of myself. Even after I moved to the house of Kim Sang Won in Jinyong in South Kyongsang Province, they went to the market to buy a shirt and trousers and brought them to me.

My Motherland Is the General's Bosom

My old comrades, whose tidings I had ceased to hear for one or another reason, came to learn of my whereabouts, through the articles in *Mal* and visited me. Among them Comrade Kim Pyong Ju again called on me in the rest home, bringing his eldest daughter with him. I met them

gladly. His daughter, Ji Hyon, was already a grown-up girl, and was working. She was sharp-witted and affable. The more I looked at her, the more satisfaction she brought me, as if I was seeing my daughter Hyon Ok. Later she behaved toward me as she did toward her father. Her father must have told her to behave that way. In the summer of 1991, when I suffered a stroke and was hospitalized at the Pusan University, Ji Hyon came to Pusan, taking a leave from work and nursing me for a whole month. I felt ashamed that I could not repay her kindness and lived only receiving her help.

But it was not just welcomed guests who called on me. Once a man called on me, saying he was from my province. Closely looking at him, I found his face familiar. I doubted why he called on me, since I was not on very good terms with him in my native place. He was an ardent Christian, fanatical even in the time of Japanese rule. He used to abuse our functionaries as devils. After liberation, I heard the rumour that he went over to south Korea. This was the last I had heard of him until he appeared at my door.

In south Korea, he seemed to have held fast to his religious belief. He led a devoted religious life, assuming a heavy responsibility in a local church of the religious denomination which among different sects of reformative Christianity was known to have almost no concern for social reformation and attach importance only to the salvation of individual spirit. He asked me to write an article for the newspaper of his church telling that I repented of acting as a "Red" and hoped to become a servant of God. Then his church would help me to live in comfort for the rest of my life. I was struck dumb with amazement, but I did not show any sign of it and asked, "Why do you ask me of all people to write such an article?"

"Our church has helped many pickpockets, thieves and gangsters, who seemed not to want to be saved, repent and reform themselves. Seeing such miracles, many people will follow suit and embrace the faith."

If I were to write an article, did he intend to publicize that "The Red who did not convert all his life repented when he came to our church"? What a pitiful man! At last we parted from each other in an unfriendly manner. This threw a gloom over me. How can they lead individual spirits properly when they do not treat their fellow provincials as men, but intend to use them to their own purpose?

Thus all kinds of people called on me, for which the director of the rest home complained: He said, "Other old people have almost no callers; when only you often have visitors, others will feel lonely." So he told me to dissuade visitors from coming to me. Unlike the girl from the

general affairs section, he seemed to guard himself against me from the beginning. I wrote articles for magazines and therefore I had many visitors. This seemed to have made him more cautious.

In the meanwhile the girl from the general affairs section volunteered to establish my census register and went about to go through the procedures. Thanks to her, I received the "resident registration certificate" in which the rest home of the Salvation Army was indicated as my domicile of origin and my present residence. When I looked into the "resident registration certificate", sad recollections came over me.

At the same time I all the more missed my native place of Phungsan.

I was reminded of the days in 1948 when the Democratic People's Republic was founded and I ran about filled with joy. I celebrated my wedding with Sun Im amidst this joy. The flag of the Republic fluttered over our heads and voices singing *Song of Proclamation of the People's Republic* resounded around us.

I looked again into the "resident registration certificate" that lay before me. I thought of the unwelcomed friend who had advised me to attend his church.

Should I live in this land forever? Of course, there were quite a few sympathetic and righteous people here, but...

No. My motherland is only one. It is invariably the bosom of General Kim Il Sung, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where my family, relatives and friends live, although I have been separated from it for over 40 years. Forgive me, motherland and Party! I may not be embraced by you till my last moment, but I will remain your son, the son of the Party, forever!

The Last Tidings of Comrade Jong Tae Chol, an Unconverted Long-Term Prisoner

I felt my heart rending, learning unexpectedly of the last tidings of Comrade Jong Tae Chol while reading a copy of *Hangyore Sinmun* dated November 25, 1990.

It said that his dead body and his will were discovered in the woods on Hansan Island, Thongyong County, South Kyongsang Province at about six o'clock on the morning of the 21st of November.

He was a young guerrilla on Mount Jiri. He lived in prison for 35 years, subjected to torture. He died one year after his release from prison. I grieved a great deal over his death.

Like me, he was a guerrilla on Mount Jiri and an unconverted long-

term prisoner, but we had never exchanged words. Actually, we had never had the opportunity to do so. When I was confined in the Chongju Protective Custody House, I once saw him from a distance and learned through comrades who he was. That was all I knew of him.

Although I had never exchanged words with him, he was my comrade-in-arms and a comrade linked with me by our beliefs.

He was born in Ryongchon County, North Phyongan Province in 1926. After liberation he attended the officers training school of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. When the war broke out, he was given the duty of guarding the liberated areas of south Korea and was dispatched to South Jolla Province. When the US troops landed in Inchon and blocked his way, Comrade Jong Tae Chol climbed Mount Jiri. At the crossroads of retreating to the north or fighting on Mount Jiri, he chose the alternative of becoming a guerrilla. His record of struggle can be said to be similar to mine. He became an instructor in charge of military drill on Mount Jiri. He was always taciturn, staunch and sincere and brave in battle. He lost consciousness, receiving gunshot wounds in a battle in December 1951 and was captured by the enemy.

He went through the cruel confinement in prison and was released from Taejon prison in 1973 after 21 years and six months of imprisonment. At that time he was 47 years old.

When the July 4 North-South Joint Statement was published and the north-south talks were at their height, Park Jung Hee's Revitalization dictatorship regime enacted the "Public Security Act" to imprison the released unconverted guerrillas once again. The "Public Security Act", which threw Comrade Jong Tae Chol into prison without trial deprived him of his freedom for another 14 years.

Like all the unconverted long-term prisoners, he suffered all kinds of torture and suppression, but did not yield in the least. Comrade Jong Tae Chol stayed with an old man by the name of O from Kyonggi Province for two years after his release from prison in 1973. The old man came to see him. The old man sympathized deeply with this honest and diligent man. When Comrade Jong Tae Chol appeared in a pitiable state before the old man, he was dumbfounded and said, "Man must survive above all, mustn't he?" At this he replied, a smile lingering about his mouth, "Man must be true to his principles."

"What are the principles? They are not seen nor can be held in one's hand. One must have children before one gets old", the old man muttered. He knew that if he affixed his seal to the written statement of conversion, he could marry, though belatedly, and have children and enjoy a warm family atmosphere. However, he said to the old man, "Old Man, if

someone wants to deprive you of your most precious thing, will you give him it when he coaxes or beats you? Belief is invisible and cannot be held in one's hand, but it is most dear to man."

How did Comrade Jong Tae Chol hold fast to his faith to the last? He was imprisoned again and released from prison at the age of over sixty. He spent the rest of his life at a tangarine farm on Hansan Island, in Thongyong County, South Kyongsang Province. His health failed due to his long confinement and he was suddenly struck with an enteric fever. His body was in such a state that he could not hold out any longer. The disease would lead the sick old man to his death. Then how the rascals who had been hell-bent to break his faith for decades would be delighted! Nothing is sadder than to die without making one's killer pay dearly for it. He could not die, deprived of the last joy of a man at dying, unable to settle his accounts with his enemies. He had no other alternative but to make it the weapon of his struggle to bring his fast extinguishing life to a close. So he must have gone to the pine woods on Hansan Island of his own accord, holding to his bosom the will expressing his belief, which would make his enemies tremble.

The will of Comrade Jong Tae Chol, which reviewed his life, said, "...I made efforts, though small, to reunify the country peacefully, joined the Party and strove to build a society in the motherland where people would live in a paradise on earth, but I have no hope to survive anymore and so I am obliged to choose this path.

"Forgive me for everything. It is my last hope that I will be buried on this spot and a pine tree be planted over me. I could accomplish nothing in my lifetime. After death I want to become fuel for the birth of a pine tree."

Reading his will, I shed tears. If he had died beside his dear comrades and friends, his parents and brothers and sisters in the reunified country, he would have closed his eyes, easy in mind.

I am also an old man whose days are numbered. If death comes to me, should I close my life, leaving a suicide note wishing for national reunification, as Comrade Jong Tae Chol had done?

Oh, when will reunification come? It seems that I never so intensely longed for reunification as at that time.

Coming over to north Korea, I learned that the "National Reunification Prize" was awarded to Comrade Jong Tae Chol.

Jong Hui Chol, sister of Comrade Jong Tae Chol, who lives in Ryonggang County, said at the second memorial service for her brother:

"...Even after death you wanted to become the fuel of growth for a sturdy tree of national reunification. The great leader and the respected

leader Comrade Kim Jong Il gratified your wish. The 'National Reunification Prize' has been awarded to you so that your life of vicissitudes remains recorded in the history of the country as the eternal fuel for national reunification.

"Dear brother, we planted a pine tree in our minds. In the minds of myself, my husband, my children, the sons and daughters of our elder brothers, too.... The pine tree will be green forever in our minds as an unshakable pillar."

I believe her remark. His death will not be in vain.

The remains of Comrade Jong Tae Chol, who rests alone on the shores of Hansan Island in the southern-most of the country, will denounce the inhuman murderous atrocities of the consecutive rulers of south Korea.

On the fourth of December in 1990, under the auspices of Mingahyop, a memorial service for Comrade Jong Tae Chol was held in the Seoul Myongdong Cathedral.

After the memorial service, I all the more missed my wife. At the death of Comrade Jong Tae Chol, I must have had a foreboding that my days were numbered.

10. WAITING

I Heard of My Wife's Tidings

One stirring year was closing. That year the waves of national reunification undulated over to the whole territory of Korea. On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the country's liberation, the Pan-National Rally of the People in North Korea and Overseas for Peace and the Reunification of the Country was held at the northern area of Panmunjom (The south side failed to send its delegation owing to the obstructive manœuvres of the south Korean rulers.) and in September the First North-South High-Level Talks were carried out in Seoul.

In October, the teams of the north and south played the "reunification football games" in Pyongyang and Seoul and the Pan-National Reunification Concert was opened in Pyongyang. And in October the Second North-South High-Level Talks were held in Pyongyang and the third talks in Seoul in December.

During the third talks the "Bidding-1990-Out Reunification National-Traditional Concert" was given in Seoul; the Pyongyang National Music Troupe conducted joint performances with the traditional music troupe of south Korea on two occasions, once at the Art Hall and again at the State Theatre in Seoul.

In 1990, the nation's hearts were full of joy and hope as if reunification was near at hand and at the same time hope and depression alternately knocked at the door of my heart. At the end of that year, another paramount event was awaiting me.

It happened on December 20, 1990. Sin, the journalist with *Mal,* hastily called on me. I wondered what happened to her. She took me, almost pulling me, to a quiet teahouse near the rest home and said, "Here is some happy news for you." She went on to say that a Korean woman living in Germany had sent a letter to her on having read my notes in *Mal* and that the letter carried my family's tidings.

It was really shocking! As I watched Sin taking the letter out of her bag, my hands began to tremble. Looking at me, she seemed afraid that I would have a stroke. So, she said, grasping my trembling hand in hers: "Dear sir, don't be too surprised. It says your wife and daughter live in Pyongyang."

And then she put the letter in my hand. I looked at the letter but the words blurred in my eyes. I looked again and again, but I could not read them. Apparently she understood and said: "The sender of the letter is Sin Ok Ja, a Korean woman living in Germany. She went to West Germany to work as a nurse and settled down there. She is working at an organization for the Korean expatriates' movement in Germany. There she read your notes in *Mal.* She wondered how she could help you and fortunately had an opportunity to visit Pyongyang to attend the Pan-National Rally last year. There she showed the *Mal* article to a reporter with *Thongil Sinbo* and begged him to find your family's whereabouts. Three months after her return to Germany she received a letter from the reporter to the effect that your wife and daughter live in Pyongyang."

Mother has passed away!–this idea came even amidst confused thoughts. Sin went on: "I want you to write a letter to your wife. If it is published in our magazine, your wife will certainly be able to read it."

While listening to her words, my mind was far away. The images of my mother, wife and young daughter appeared before me. So she was living in health as I had guessed!

"I will write."

Unable to sit any longer, I rose, holding the letter in my hand. Miss Sin accompanied me to the rest home. As she left, I stood against a tree in the yard. It seemed as if I was in a dream. When I looked back I saw Sin standing there to watch me. I motioned her away quickly before entering the front gate.

When I entered my room, fortunately the mute old man was taking a nap alone. His inability to speak was his only fault, as he was gentle-hearted. He was far better than the healthy man bothering others.

I opened the letter carefully, lest he should awake.

The contents of the letter, which began with the words "How are you?" were just as Sin had said; "...It is said that the wife and daughter of Mr. Ri In Mo live in Pyongyang..."

There was no doubt that my mother had died. As long as she lived, my wife was on no account a woman who would be reluctant to support her. When did my mother pass away? Where was her body buried? Though I expected it, tears streamed down my cheeks. Who were present at her deathbed? Did she suffer from chronical diseases, I wondered. Dear Sun Im, thank you for surviving. Bring up our daughter well. The reporter with *Mal* advises me to write a letter to you. Do you know how many letters I have written to you so far? Since I had neither paper nor pencil nor stamp, I was not able to write and send letters, but I have written to you every day. That little girl I left behind had grown into a 40-

year-old woman already! Now that you personally brought her up, she must be a competent functionary. Have we a son-in-law? Many grandchildren, too? What would the son-in-law be like? And children? My dear, Sun Im, thank you for remaining alive. Thank you for surviving.

For several days I tried to write a letter, but it was impossible. Because various ideas entangled with each other in my mind I could not decide how to I begin.

If Sin had not given me a deadline to write, it would have taken several months. I composed some sentences as occurred to my mind and handed over the letter to Sin. Still now I hardly remember what I wrote on that letter.

Thanks to an unfamiliar Korean woman I was able to gladly welcome the New Year of 1991. At the mere thought of my wife and children eating rice-cake soup in a happy home atmosphere I felt a sorrow, which had rankled deeply in my heart during the past 40 years, pass away.

Meeting with Mr. Kim Sang Won

In the New Year I also happily greeted a meeting with Kim Sang Won, who took care of me later as if he were my real father.

The fate of a genuine man cannot be foreseen. Yet, I would live the rest of my life with Mr. Kim Sang Won in Kimhae of Kyongsang Province. We were not blood relatives. I was born and raised far away at Kaema Plateau. We were relatives only through the fact that we were of the same nation. This is sentment proceeding from compatriots and the same nation?

Mr. Kim, born in 1941, was a political sciences graduate from Konguk University and had long served with the public section of the Seoul municipal office. Entering the '70s, when the "revitalization" dictatorship of Park Jung Hee made society gloomy and dark, he quit his job and joined in the movements of the opposition parties. Later he worked at the National Council for Restoration of Democracy and aimed at politics. Working as a cadre of an opposition party, he stood as a candidate for the National Assembly in the Kimhae District, his native place. But he was disillusioned at politics in the course of the election. This changed the direction of his life. He came back to Yongjon village, Sinryong-ri, Jinyong-up, Kimhae County, his home town, and became a farmer. There he led a simple life, guarding his ancestral burial grounds and cultivating fields he had inherited.

In the meantime, the newspaper *Hangyore Sinmun* was founded in

1988 and the magazine *Mal* also registered as a periodical. Mr. Kim subscribed to both. Through these he had access to the problems of long-term prisoners and called on me.

I must at this point mention a solemn promise made when Mr. Kim and his wife married.

At the time of their marriage, Mr. Kim, who had been engaged in the campaign to remove the "Revitatlization" dictatorship, became involved in politics, proceeding from a belief that the National Assembly would be able to supervise the government. Those who devoted themselves to opposition-party work in those days had to undergo great hardships. Prior to his marriage, Mr. Kim pledged to his fiancee, who felt a little uneasy though she understood his aim: "I'll be engrossed in political activity for the next ten years. If my efforts prove futile, I'll change the direction of my life."

In addition he promised if he did not accomplish a great cause of reforming the society during those ten years, they would take in a poor, invalid person and care for him.

As his mind somewhat settled down after coming back to Kimhae in 1987, Kim Sang Won thought that the time had come to carry out his promise.

He began to ponder the matter in detail; the person they would take in must be, first of all, an orphan or an old man; and in case of bringing up an orphan, they might come to rely on his support in their old age. So they decided that it would be better to bring a supportless old man to their home.

To take in an old man they of course must go to rest home. Mr. Kim, who had worked at the Seoul municipal office for many years, was not so ignorant of the world as to simply call on a rest home and expect to get an old man.

"It is a reality today that most managers of rest homes run them only to line their own pockets with state subsidies that are paid based on the number of old men in the home, instead of proceeding from a spirit of sacrifice or public service. In these circumstances, if I went there and said, 'Let me take an old man with me' it would be likely that I would be treated as insane," explained Mr. Kim.

When he asked his former colleagues at the Seoul municipal office to introduce a helpless old man to him, he learned about the unconverted long-term prisoners who had begun to be released from prison at the end of 1988. He then thought, "Such are the people I should aid."

In the meantime, his nephew Kim Pyong Gon, a leader in the opposition movement and deputy chief of the politics section of the Federation for National Unification, died of cancer in December of 1990. Suddenly

losing a distinguished man who he had pinned his expectations on, Kim Sang Won called at the house of mourning, but even tears failed him. Still now, whenever Mr. Kim Pyong Gon is spoken of, Kim Sang Won praises him highly, saying, "He was a truly great man with high spirits." Needless to say, the death of Kim Pyong Gon was a great shock to him. After the funeral, Kim Sang Won became impatient at the thought that he must set about doing something at the earliest date. Around that time he learned of the death of Jong Tae Chol. I was told that Mr. Kim Sang Won lamented, "How could such a thing happen in the human world?" So, he first called on Comrade So Jun Sik, who was known as the first man released from jail among the long-term prisoners.

Comrade So Jun Sik was surprised to hear of the plans of this stranger. Kim explained his determination and requested Comrade So to introduce a proper old man to him. He said the man should be able to easily adapt himself to the weary local life because Mr. Kim was not a millionaire. His home is not luxurious and the foods in the countryside are poorer than in the urban areas. If Comrade So chooses a proper man, taking these things into account, he would support the man with sincerity.

Comrade So was quite embarrassed at the unexpected visit of Mr. Kim, a rare man in this society. He seemed somewhat worried about entrusting a friend to him. After testing the visitor again in different respects, Comrade So understood his true heart and then introduced me to him.

Through the mediation of Comrade So I first met Mr. Kim at Insa-dong in Seoul.

"The moment I heard your name I thought to myself, 'This is the man whose story was carried in *Mal*!' I was glad and wanted to see you as soon as possible," said Mr. Kim.

Mr. Kim told the whole story of his resolution to have a long-term prisoner with his family and went on: "Go down to my home on a visit first and live for a fortnight or a month and then make up your mind whether you want to live with us in the future."

I was really amazed to hear this. To tell the truth, during the two years after my release from prison I was given more help than I could have imagined in the previous days. In addition, at this time appears a man willing to admit me into his family. I was anxious to leave the home as soon as possible but I still had my doubts. So I said: "I wonder if my staying in your home would do harm to you."

"Leave that matter to me entirely," Mr. Kim asserted.

As our talks continued, his sincerity beat at my heart. So, I said no more, only adding, "I'll go in a few days."

Mr. Kim returned home after telling me of the journey up to Jinyong, the seat of Kimhae County. I bid farewell to some comrades, saying that I would go to Jinyong and stay there for several days.

Mr. Kim Sang Won's Family

At last I started out for Mr. Kim's home. It was toward the end of January of 1991. I told the rest home that I would go to a quiet rural village to recuperate my health and return. I left, putting off the procedures of changing my residence. Showing concern for my health on a long journey, one comrade volunteered to accompany me. So together we travelled to Jinyong.

We arrived at a rural village after travelling about five minutes from Jinyong by taxi. Mr. Kim Sang Won's house was at the edge of Yongjon village. His house was backed by a hill. On the left side of the gate was a pavilion bearing a tablet with the inscription "Wolphajong". On the right side was a one-story house where his family lived, which nestled cosily against the hill. The country air, which I had not inhaled for a long interval, was wonderful.

Mr. Kim, his wife and their four children came out and welcomed us. A room with a big window facing south was fixed up for me. After I had entered the room and sat down, Mr. Kim introduced his family to me.

Ri Phil Ju, Mr. Kim's wife, was a kind woman with a pleasant look about her. She was a teacher at the Taechang Primary School in Jinyong. They had two sons and two daughters. Their eldest daughter, Yo Jin, was in her third year of middle school, and the eldest son, Jong Jin, was in his second year. The second son, Ki Jin, was in his first year of the middle school, and the second daughter, Yong Suk, was in her sixth year of primary school. All had bright eyes and seemed clever. They were meek and shy, perhaps because they were country children. While the grown-ups talked, they sat quietly and listened.

When supper was brought in for me, Mrs. Ri said with a smile, "I'm a poor cook and we have no artificial seasonings, so the food is not very tasty. But all of it was prepared with vegetables gathered from our fields, which are unpolluted. So please help yourself." The children and elders ate sitting together around the table. I felt as if I had returned home. I wondered whether every day my wife in Pyongyang enjoyed such a meal prepared with kindness.

After having a tasty supper, we two old men talked with Mr. Kim. When I came out of the room for a short while at about nine o'clock, the

children, who were about to go to bed, bid me good night, "Grandpa, good night!".

Hearing "Grandpa" I felt something warm in my heart. Such is family happiness, I thought. Mr. Kim came out after me and said, showing me to the water closet, "I see to it that my children sleep early and rise early lest they watch bad TV programs in the evening."

I, too, immediately fell asleep. I arose early, since I cannot sleep after dawn. Some time later I heard noises from the kitchen. Mrs. Ri was already preparing breakfast. I looked at my watch. It was four o'clock. I stealthily got up and sat looking out the window into the darkness. I heard the sound of a door opening and two children passed by the window outside. I wondered where they were going in the cold dawn. After about one hour, the two children returned carrying a newspaper.

After a while Mr. Kim came in, bringing a copy of the newspaper *Hangyore Sinmun* with him.

"Where have the children been to at dawn?"

"Did you see them going out? They have returned after delivering newspapers to the village."

At that time, 23 families subscribed to the newspaper *Hangyorye Sinmun*. Hearing that the lack of a child to deliver the newspaper had caused trouble, Mr. Kim sent his two sons. Recently, even in the countryside, parents do not want their children to deliver newspapers, whatever the pay, on the plea that it may interfere with their studies. *Hangyore Sinmun* had serious problems because it had low circulation over a wide area and paid a very low fee.

"Malady of national ruin and malady of entry examination have spread even to the countryside," Mr. Kim said with straight face. I thought he was educating his children well.

At that moment the door opened softly and his second son, Ki Jin, entered quietly.

He said, "Good morning, Grandpa!" and went out, taking the chamber pot out of my room. At the moment I pitied the child and said, "Ki Jin, leave it alone."

Mr. Kim rather dissuaded me, "It is our traditional good manners and custom that the grandson clears away the bed pan of his grandpa. In this way they learn the course of human life and grow up, don't they? It is a course of education. So don't dissuade them."

The comrade beside me admired this gentle man's insight. "Children in the city don't want to be beside their grandpa and grandma, saying they smell of old age."

After washing our faces, we went out to view the house. There was a

fairly large burial ground on the waist of the back hill, which I failed to notice the previous night. When I asked Mr. Kim, he said that it was the grave of his ancestor Kim Kuk Gom, who had served as a high civil official, *Taesahon,* and then the governor of Jolla Province under the reign of King Songjong of the Ri Dynasty. He went on to say:

"Originally my native village was not here, but at Thoerae-ri in nearby Hanrim Sub-County. Four high civil officials were produced from among my ancestors. Hence came the name of the sub-county. In particular, my ancestor Kim Kom served as a *Taesahon,* but was very poor and lived in the house of his daughter and died there. Appreciating him, Yon San Gun Regent fixed his grave site in the present burial ground. I am his 17th grandsom. I live here so that I can tend his grave and the Wolpha Pavilion."

My comrade said, indicating Mr. Kim's burial ground, "The grave site seems very good. It is perhaps so considering that it was granted by the king. I don't know how to appreciate the lay of a grave site, but look at the features of the hill on both sides of the grave site. The right side is evocative of a Blue Dragon and the left side, White Tiger, aren't they?"

Mr. Kim replied with a smile: "Formerly some people have made such a remark. But I do not want to make a fortune and succeed in life thanks to my ancestor's grave site. When I look at that grave every morning, the thought comes to me that I should live a life befitting the oldest grandson of the family who led an honest life although they served as high civil officials."

Listening to him, I seemed to understand somewhat why Mr. Kim volunteered to take care of me, an old man, though he was not rich. The root of his life was associated with his pride in his ancestors, who had led honest lives.

We headed for the Wolpha Pavilion, which was beside the house. Entering the gate, I found that the main building was a fine-looking structure with rooms on both sides of a high, large hall. In one room three or four young people were reading books. Mr. Kim introduced them to me: "These are students studying for the examinations. They wanted to cook and study here, saying that the place is quiet and good, so I cleared a room for them."

It was a "free study house for examination" so to speak.

We hastily left the pavilion, fearing that we would disturb them. When we went up a little toward the burial ground along an inclined path, we found a large lotus pond. Lotus leaves thrived in the spring and summer. It presented a captivating sight the likes of which I had not for many years. I was fascinated by the sight.

Later Mr. Kim and I often came to the lotus pond to rest. I was basking in the sun on the side of the lotus pond one warm day when the

sound of splashing suddenly startled me. It sounded too heavy for frogs, so I asked Mr. Kim: "What was that?"

"It was a table frog. The large ones weigh as much as two kilograms."

"Do you raise them?"

Mr. Kim smiled and shook his head "no". A neighbour raised table frogs as a sideline. When there was flood in summer, his frog pond overflowed and the frogs spread to the ponds in the whole village. Listening to him, I looked more closely when there was a splash. It was a really big frog. The thought came to me that I roasted and ate the hind legs of frogs in my childhood.

I heard people like dishes of high quality prepared with such foreign frogs. But I could not understand them. Really, how could our traditional food survive to be an exception in the south Korean society greatly influenced by the United States, Japan and the Western countries?

Still dishes prepared with ants were in vogue at the best restaurants in Seoul and Pusan. Not only this, but snake dishes and the dishes prepared with fresh monkey brains are gobbled up by the wealthy.

When I listened quietly in the evening, the croaking of the Western frogs sounded like the groaning of ghosts. Korean frogs croak affably...

When we returned after viewing the house, Mrs. Ri had breakfast ready. The children were studying in their room. Four food pails were seen beside the table. We sat around the table and ate. After washing the dishes and making preparations for my lunch, Mrs. Ri left for work with the children at a little before eight o'clock.

After a while the comrade who accompanied me got ready to return. Mr. Kim got up to see him off. The comrade said, "I came here and see that the environment of the house commends itself to me." Holding my hand, he added that he was pleased that all was well for me and left.

From the next day I and Ki Jin used the same room. The lovable child spoke little but was honest and clever. Although he must be busy delivering newspapers at dawn, he always cleared the bed pan, folded up the bedclothes and brought water for me to wash up. His mother must have told him to do so. Not only this, when he thought I had finished breakfast, he brought a toothbrush and gargling water for me. Although he played with his brother in the evening, he came running before I knew it and made the bed for me.

I took a liking to the children. Some times hours passed while I was looking at the sleeping face of Ki Jin. Setting right the quilt Ki Jin had kicked away, I wondered whether my wife in Pyongyang had such a grandson and whether he was honest and laudable like Ki Jin. This made a yearning for my home surge in my heart.

I had not enjoyed such family happiness since I had left home. In my letters to comrades in Seoul I wrote about the happiness I enjoyed. Many comrades visited me. They perhaps wanted to see for themselves how I lived. I was glad to meet them and, at the same time, was sorry that Mrs. Ri, who prepared breakfast at four o'clock in the morning and then taught all day only to work in the kitchen all evening, would be troubled by the guests.

When I told my thoughts to Mr. Kim, he was rather embarrassed: "Never mind. My wife feels happy as my health has improved after you came to live here. Formerly, I got angry reading about the trend of world affairs in the newspaper and took to drinking, having no one to talk with in the countryside. After you came, I came to have frank talks with you and drink less. In addition, your acquaintances continuously visit my house. So I meet them sitting at home and learn much from them."

Husband and Wife Truly Rare

As I was afforded courteous treatment, I had nothing to do at dawn when I got up. So I began to sweep the yard with a view to help Ki Jin, who went out to deliver newspapers. But Mrs. Ri came out of the kitchen after me in dismay and said, "Where is the grandpa seen to sweep the yard while there are children in the house? Please, instead take a stroll in the dew-laden field in the early morning."

Mrs. Ri took the broom away from me and gave me a walking stick instead. Taking a stroll in the dew-laden field, I thought: Mr. Kim is a rare person in this world. His wife is all the more so.

In south Korea, the saying "If I am to survive I must kill you" is in vogue, and all kinds of crimes are openly committed. It was a recent occurrence that a husband and wife in their twenties strangled a five-year old child for money and threw it into a reservoir. The criminal husband and wife kidnapped a child in Suwon City in Kyonggi Province to get the ransom money and committed such atrocity while demanding the parents pay 50 million *won.*

These hair-raising terrible events took place every day, injustice and corruption prevailed in society, narcotics, degradation and the amusement industry are rapidly spreading, and the destruction of ethics and morals is indescribable. In that society Mr. Kim Sang Won and his wife can be likened to flowers rarely seen in the desolate wilderness exposed to raging winds.

As I learned while living with his family, Mr. Kim was not greedy. A poor farmer, he lent part of his field to others to cultivate, saying "Its cultivation was beyond my capability", but received nothing in return. A hus-

band may behave that way, but his wife, who manages the household, may think otherwise. Mrs. Ri always understood and respected her husband's intentions.

Prompted by curiosity, I once asked Mrs. Ri, "How is that you and your husband closely resemble each other?"

"It is because the family has taken pride in leading an honest life without doing harm to others since ancient times. If I had not taken the job as a teacher after marriage, I might have been worried about our diet."

Saying so, she smiled broadly. She was an honest woman with her own definite view. I never saw Mrs. Ri frown.

On Sundays, Mrs. Ri often told me about the school to divert me.

"Recently banana and other imported fruits have poured into the county seat and the numbers of people who buy them have increased."

So Mrs. Ri taught the children that the countryside is the home of the nation and that if the countryside is to be maintained they should not eat imported fruits. In her class, a simple party was held once a month for the children with a birthday that month. A table is set with foods their parents have brought. One child's parent brought a bunch of bananas to the birthday party one month. Seeing this, a child raised his hand and got up: "We will not eat the imported bananas, because if we eat the imported bananas, our countryside will go to ruin."

Hearing him, the parent who brought the banana blushed deeply.

After I came to Jinyong, Mr. Kim frequently visited the Kwachon Police Station and the public security section of the local public procurators' office in Suwon to go through the procedure of receiving me. It was no easy matter to move the place of residence of a man under a sentence of "limitation of residence". In May, I went with Mr. Kim to the local public procurators' office and drew up a document.

Human feelings seem to be the same even in the case of public servants. When we rose up after drawing up the document, a young man who served as a notary abruptly held both hands of Mr. Kim and said, "You are doing a really good thing, Sir. Please take good care of this old man, who has led a life of hardships."

Tears welled up in the eyes of the young man.

About the 10th of July, 1991, I was registered as a lodger in the resident register of Mr. Kim. It is probably attributable to the fact that Mr. Kim knew well how to deal with the government office. The story sounds simple, as I tell the result. But to begin with, I was in agony, thinking what would I do if the change of residence was not allowed. I thought I should return to the rest home, although it would be painful for me, lest I cause trouble for this family. Mrs. Ri unburdened herself to me after I became

the lawful "lodger" of her family: "At first when Father proposed to take care of an old long-term ex-prisoner, I was opposed to it. I said I should like to take care of him after I bring up my children and retire from school. More than anything else I feared that I might fail to attend to everything properly as I work outside the house.

"If you remained in the rest home, you would at least have meals on time. As Father insisted for two weeks, I gave in. However, when I came to look after you, I found you were simple, like a child, and my children are fond of you. So recently the thought came to me that Father was right. Ours is a lonely family that had the only one son through seven generations. You have no family and relatives in south Korea. So I hope that we lonely people can live together for a long time, relying on each other."

Mrs. Ri added, "When Ki Jin was asked at school to express his future hopes in writing, he wrote, 'Before I become what I want to be, I should like to see the country reunified.'"

This remark would have thrown the parents infected with the malady of entrance examinations into a rage, but Mrs. Ri was much pleased that her children came to think like grown-ups thanks to me.

But I do not think that it was ascribable to me. It is attributable to the irresistable powerful trend of the sentiment of the south Korean people.

Whatever desperate efforts the authorities may make to suppress the feelings of the people for national reunification, they cannot check the trend of love of the nation that is growing rapidly.

The remark dropped from the lips of Ki Jin, a boy who grew up receiving thorough "anticommunist" education, shows how serious and urgent the issue of national reunification is. It is written in the textbooks of primary schools that all the north Korean people are "Reds", have red faces and even grow horns, so that even educational workers in south Korea blush deeply. Ki Jin, who was educated with these textbooks, said that he hoped that the country would be reunified.

Mr. Ri's remark reminded me of the university student Rim Su Gyong's statement that "I prize national reunification more than my youth."

A month later, the Paektu-Halla March to promote national reunification started on Mt. Paektu, reflecting the desire of the people of the north and south and from abroad. Students Pak Song Hui and Song Yong Sung, representatives of Jondaehyop (the National Council of Student Representatives) took part in the march. I heard the news much later because I was at the time hospitalized, having suffered a stroke.

They went to the north breaking all kinds of obstructive manoeuvres and through the blockade of the south Korean rulers and raised the flag

of Jondaehyop. Although the Paektu-Halla March did not reach Mt. Halla and was stopped at Panmunjom, the prevailing situation reaffirmed my conviction that no force can check the strong feelings of the people desiring to reach the gates of national reunification.

Comrade Han Chang U Who Moved In with Ducks

Around that time a happy event took place.

Comrade Han Chang U, who raised ducks near Pusan, moved his duck pen to the hill behind Mr. Kim's house.

Comrade Han was arrested while fighting as a guerrilla on Mount Jiri and served twenty years in prison before he was released. At the time of his arrest, he was 25 years old. Although he was in prison for twenty years, he was the youngest of the five unmarried men to be released among us. Originally he was a man of good health, was clever-fingered and had a quick eye for things. He could quickly lay a foundation for life with carpentry he learned in the prison. Some time after, he married and had three children. Thus he established a home and lived in a definite place of residence. Perhaps because of this he was not taken to the protective custody block after the enactment of the "Public Security Act" and was only put under surveillance for public security. It was a really rare occurrence.

Comrade Han began to raise ducks professionally several years before, taking an interest in *Anas platyrhynchos,* which was used as a medicine. Having no land of his own, he had hardships moving from place to place.

A fairly large area was needed to build a pen to keep over 2,000 ducks. The pen had to be near a city to buy feed and find a market for them. He could not conceive the idea of obtaining an adequate place, since rents were too high. To his regret he had to enter a rural village. But even rural villages were not safe places. Several times after his pens were built, he was driven away on the plea that the fowl's droppings polluted the river.

When Comrade Han came to see me and told me how he had fared recently. Mr. Kim, who was silently listening, said, "There seems to be a suitable place on our hill. Please use it if you need."

Making a tour of the flat ground on the waist of the hill behind the house, Comrade Han was much pleased and said, "It is suitable in many ways." Later Comrade Han completed one pen after another by his deft carpentry. I

went up to the hill to look at the pens with the help of a stick on the day when Comrade Han came driving over 2,000 ducks. Comrade Han, who was looking at the quacking ducks with satisfaction, willingly helped me.

"This is my fourth move with these ducks. When I was in difficulty, Mr. Kim willingly offered me his land. So I came and began to build pens. While building them I found that Mr. Kim's burial grounds are over there. Who on earth would like ducks being raised below the burial ground for one's ancestry? Moreover, he does not intend to charge rent. You as well as I have met a person rare in this world."

From that day forward, comrades who came from Seoul to see me were able to eat roasted duck to their hearts' content. I passed time reading books and strolling on the hill and in the field, becoming a member of this harmonious family in a place with clean air and clear streams. This lowered my blood pressure and lent force to my lame legs. I was able to go up and come down from the duck pen with ease. I owed this to the people around me.

Sin Ok Ja, a fellow countrywoman in Germany, belongs to the many people to whom I am grateful. Toward the end of 1990 she conveyed to me news of my wife in Pyongyang through the magazine *Mal.* Some time after the February 1991 issue of *Mal* carried my letter to my wife, she sent me another letter. In her letter, she wrote that she was much pained at my separation from my wife for 40 years and she would endeavour to convey this issue of *Mal* to my wife through a person who would visit Pyongyang. In Germany, the Negotiation Council for Long-term Prisoners, which our fellow countrymen in Germany formed and she was a member of, was meeting in Frankfurt, she wrote. She enclosed 300 marks she said she collected at the meeting.

How should I express my gratitude to Mrs. Sin Ok Ja, whom I had never met and who was too faraway to call on? I wrote a letter to her in which I said that I was grateful to her and that it was not made-up courteousness. I was pained by the fact of national division that forced a letter, for which a postage stamp should have been enough to guarantee delivery, to be sent to Pyongyang via Germany and the Soviet Union after crossing Asia. Nevertheless, I hoped that my wife received and read my letter even though it had to make such a long journey. How selfish I was!

I Was Put on the Operating Table

On the morning of the 10th of July 1991 I had a phone call from Mrs. Sin Ok Ja. She said, "I received your return letter. Your wife now must

have received and seen the issue of *Mal.* The Negotiation Council for the Long-term Prisoners in Germany is going to invite you and your wife to Germany under its auspices. I hope you will take good care of yourself." My whole body was seized with excitement. My heart began to beat rapidly.

I went up the hill with a wandering mind. I was out of condition and, moreover, the weather was bad that day. So I was not inclined to show interest in it.

The voice of the fellow countrywoman continued to ring in my ears. "Your wife now must have received and seen the issue of *Mal.*" I fell down along the inclined path. I made a false step. I must have been excited. I shook the dust off my clothes and returned home, fearing that I might cause trouble to Mr. Kim.

That afternoon I had no appetite and felt ill. But I did not realize that it was an abnormal symptom.

On the evening of the 16th of July I suddenly lost consciousness. Mr. Kim and two comrades who were visiting from Seoul took me to a hospital in Masan. The analysis of the X-ray photograph showed that it was a cerebral hemorrhage. When I tripped and fell on the hill, very thin brain arteries burst, the internal bleeding gradually increased, and this led to the loss of consciousness.

The Masan hospital refused to take in and treat me saying that there was no hope of recovery. I was hastily taken to the hospital attached to Pusan University. I underwent a surgical operation by which a pipe was driven into my brain and the blood clot was drawn out.

It seemed that no one could ensure the results of the operation, as I was so old.

When I came to, I was in the intensive care unit. I felt as if I was enveloped in fog. The face of Mr. Kim loomed and came into sight. Some woman was beside him. She was a special nurse. When the patient recovers consciousness after brain surgery, he can be said to have passed the critical moment decisive of life and death, but the period of recovery to a normal state is important for the patient. So Mr. Kim asked for the nurse on the advice of his doctor.

Several days later Ji Hyon, the daughter of Comrade Kim Pyong Ju, came down from Seoul, taking leave from her job. As both her parents had died of liver cancer, she was taking care of her three brothers and was very poor.

Hearing the news about me, she came down to tend me. She volunteered to nurse a comrade of her father. While doing so she could not earn a living. Comradeship is carried forward through generations, I dare

say. She was sharp-witted and deft-fingered. She closely saw how the nurse tended me and learned from her. Then she came forward to do such things herself. After she came the nurse was no longer needed.

The nurse charged 40,000 *won* a day. So a heavy burden was relieved thanks to Ji Hyon.

The comrades who came from Seoul to visit me and those from Mingahyop branch in Pusan did their utmost to help me. The students of the Dental College of Pusan University came to tend me. The Mingahyop must have asked them to do so. They came to my sickroom in three shifts. Ji Hyon could occasionally take a rest thanks to them. Moreover, it was awkward to make the girl clean my bed pan. Mr. Kim was pleased that the male students from the Dental College came just in time. Twenty days passed and the hospital fee already amounted to 6 million *won*. The charge for the operation caused my comrades to worry. The newspaper *Hangyore Sinmun* reported this situation. Someone must have informed the editorial board of the newspaper of the fact. The Mingahyop branch in Pusan and the Students' Society of Pusan University jointly opened a teahouse to raise money to pay my medical fees. The results of the surgery were good and around that time I was moved to a stable recovery room. Four patients were put in one room. I was the busiest patient among them. Because two or three young people tended me and visitors came to me ceaselessly.

I spent my time in the hospital in a warm atmosphere, talking with these people whom I wanted to see, not knowing the circumstances of those days.

Mr. Kim did not entirely tell me about the difficult situation. Even if he had told me, I might not have understood him. Although the results of the operation were good, I seemed to have been in an infantile state as the functions of the brain gradually recovered. When I recall those days, I always blush.

Even after the doctor permitted me to leave the hospital, Mr. Kim put off my return home. While I was in hospital, he wanted to have my urinary trouble and lame legs diagnosed.

But, as a result of the health checkups, it was said that I was attacked by pneumonia. It was because of the sequela of operation, I supposed. The doctors said that coughing up the phlegm would help me recover, but I could not spit, because of being enervated.

The hospital said that if phlegm did not come out of my throat in one or two days, I would need another operation.

For my age it was hopeless to undergo an operation on my bronchial tubes immediately after the operation on my brain. Saying that I should

not be operated on if possible, the doctor connected an oxygen hose to my nose so that the phlegm came out easily. I felt a tickle in my nose and chest. Whenever Ji Hyon turned away her eyes even for a short while I would pull off the hose like a child. If I did not expectorate till the next day, I would require an operation on my neck. Such being the state, how anxious Ji Hyon must have been about my misbehaviour. I could not even guess how much the doctor's bill, which now had surpassed 6,000,000 *won,* would increase.

Hearing this explanation later, I could have entered a rathole for shame. Many nursed me shaking off drowsiness in hot summer days while others were collecting medical fees for me, travelling on foot in such sultry heat. Being ignorant of these movements, I lay in bed and bothered the nurse with child-like behaviour.

Mr. Kim journeyed to Seoul by a night train to arrange the medical fees.

My comrades who visited me to inquire after my health that summer said, "You are truly a lucky man." They were right, because Mr. Kim undertook all affairs occurring outside the hospital and was making every effort to solve them, Ji Hyon and students were nursing me kindly and Ki Jin and Yong Suk sat by my sickbed, keeping me company and calling me "Grandpa". At this time, I thought of my comrades who died writhing their bodies in pain, nursed by no one, in the solitary cells of the protective custody block. Isn't this human nature? However, I gave trouble to her, having become a "foolish old man". How can I repay this kindness?

I learned after my return to the north that Ji Hyon suffered from a serious illness. She had a rib removed because of rib tuberclosis. Inflammation spread near her spine, so that her body was bent and she could not stand the pain without an anodyne. Nevertheless, she wanted to leave the hospital owing to the worries about hospitalization fees, operation fees and the care of her three brothers.

So kindhearted and so sociable Ji Hyon.... She took care of me as my real daughter or granddaughter, saying, "My father always felt sorry for failing to take you into our home." But she now lies in a sickbed in pain, alone without relatives visiting her nor parents to take care of her. If only I could help her.... That she could come here and be treated in our hospitals. But for the military demarcation line, all our family would dash to her. Oh, reunification! That reunification would have been realized! That the southern land would be freed from worries about medical fee, living expenses and learning...

My Wife's Reply Letter, Which Travelled round the World

I was completely cured of pneumonia without undergoing any operation thanks to the devoted nursing of Ji Hyon and the students. I returned to Jinyong, discharged from the hospital towards the end of August after one month's hospitalization. Although I was cured of the disease, I found it difficult to walk without help. On returning I found Mrs. Ri was undertaking one hundred days of prayer for my complete recovery. I was deeply grateful and at the same time felt ashamed to see that she made a ritual cleaning of mind and body with devotion at dawn and lived on vegetables.

I took lots of vitamins and eutrophics, taking Mr. Kim's advice that I should recover physical strength weakened by the operation. I practised walking by one or two steps with the help of a stick, having Mr. Kim and his wife in devoted attendance. The Autumn Harvest Festival came before I realized. At night I gazed up at the full moon. Looking at the sky, I wished that the desires of the seventy million people of our nation be realized.

The journalist Sin from *Mal* called me one day. It was around the 24th of September. "Arriving at my office after the festival, I found a copy of the newspaper *Thongil Sinbo* on my desk," she said.

Thongil Sinbo was the newspaper through which Sin Ok Ja obtained the information concerning my family. It carried my wife's reply to the letter I addressed to her through No. 2 of 1991 of *Mal.* Without an address to be written on an envelope and without being posted, the reply letter, carried in a newspaper, had arrived after travelling round the world. This took half a year.

The next day I read the abridged letter from my wife carried by the newspaper *Hangyore Sinmun. Mal* planned to reprint my wife's letter, in its next issue.

Reading the note carried by *Hangyore Sinmun,* I learned that my mother died in 1983. It said that she breathed her last on the lap of her daughter-in-law. My wife worked all her life as the principal of a middle school. It said that my daughter Hyon Ok taught at a school. My daughter married and had children.

At the thought that my wife, like my mother, got old living alone, I was sorry and shed tears of compassion. The thought, too, came to me whether my mother, who had remained faithful to her dead husband, taught my wife to that effect. I wondered how many tears she shed unknown to my mother and her daughter. I was very grateful and pleased

to think that she brought up Hyon Ok to be a teacher and that Hyon Ok had married.

Some time later Sin Ok Ja sent me a copy of *Thongil Sinbo.* At that time I saw a picture of my wife after 40 years. Her anxiety could not be traced in her photograph, but I was pained somewhat to see that she looked to have grown old beautifully. *Thongil Sinbo,* on September 7, carried my notes published in *Mal* and on September 21 carried Sin's remarks on Kim Sang Won and a letter of gratitude my daughter Hyon Ok addressed to Mr. Kim and his wife. My wife and daughter wished me health until the day of national reunification when we could be reunited.

If an old man dies after a short illness, people say it is a happy ending. I think they said this in praise of his having lived a long life and died without causing troubles to his children. I wondered if there was a reason for me to strive to live a long life without knowing when I might fall again and cause people troubles. It goes without saying that I wanted to see my wife, daughter and grandchildren. I was pleased to learn that they were in good health and were leading happy and decent lives. When I think of Song Jung Myong and his like, who died in the mountains, and the comrades from the north who hear no tidings of their families, I desire nothing more.

In the autumn of 1991, in north Korea, a mass campaign began in demand of my repatriation, and this was reported in the south Korean press. From then on Mr. Kim's home in Jinyong, which had been quiet, became alive with visitors of different kinds.

When the north Korean press corps arrived in Seoul on the occasion of sports events or women's talks, Mr Kim's house in Jinyong was immediately surrounded by police cars. The pretext was that the north Korean journalists might make a surprise visit to gather materials.

Plainclothesmen, who arrived in five or six police cars swarmed the rural village, disrupting the quiet. Mr. Kim and the children were surprised at the sight of them. Interviews by south Korean journalists with Pyongyang citizens when they visited Pyongyang to cover the Fourth North-South High-Level Talks held in October were telecasted in south Korea. The citizens protested, saying, "Why is old Ri In Mo not allowed to return?" The south Korean press carried articles that charged the Pyongyang citizens with making "frantic" demands for my repatriation.

I was pained to think that the honest demands for my repatriation were abused as frenzied. I am not sure whether this was simply enforced compliance with the demand of the authorities. Do not they know that it is the manifestation of fraternal love and true comradely fidelity of the people of my homeland? I wonder whether it is not the manifestation of the

desire and will of the nation to put an end to the tragic division of the nation as early as possible.

However, at that time I was not fully aware of how many people shed tears of pity for my plight when my note appeared in the newspapers of north Korea and what a great social movement was launched in demand of my repatriation there. At that time, mass meetings were held in demand of my repatriation in different parts of north Korea. I did not know what solicitude the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il showed for my fate and how many times he requested my return to the General's bosom.

My Family in Pyongyang Seen through Video

Such being the situation, journalists with weekly and monthly publications began to visit Jinyong. Even journalists with the sensational magazine *Women* came to gather materials, probably intrigued by the story of a man and wife who lived apart for over forty years. I did not want to meet some of them, but it was difficult for me to send away those who took the trouble to come, making one day's travel from Seoul. I only asked them not to write articles that might have adverse effects on the unity and reunification of the nation.

Pak Yong Chan, head of the American Continent Broadcast in Washington came to me, making a long journey. This was in October. He has just returned from news coverage in Pyongyang.

"You were much talked about in Pyongyang. So I read your notes carried in *Thongil Sinbo,* wanting to know what you were like. It was impressive. I thought how can I help you apart from ideology."

So, going out of the schedule, he made a surprise visit to the apartment where my wife and children lived. My family were wary of him at first but soon thawed to him, understanding his real intentions. He interviewed them one after another and recorded them with a video camera.

"Your family unburdened their minds and broke out crying during the interviews. I was very sorry. I promised them that when I came to Seoul I would give the video tape to you. This seemed to only draw more tears from them."

Mr. Kim had no video recorder. So he borrowed one from a neighbour and we watched the video. The picture was clear. High-rise apartments in Pyongyang appeared at first and then the scene changed to the interior of the house where my wife and children lived. My wife, son-in-law and daughter, grandson and two granddaughters were seated in a room.

Mr. Pak was not seen. He was probably holding the camera and microphone. Only his voice was heard.

At first my wife appeared. When asked about her impressions at hearing my tidings, the rims of her eyes grew red. The thought struck me again that she was old.

"Forty years have passed since I parted from my husband at the age of 23. But I continued to believe my husband was alive."

Mr. Pak said, indicating the door of the entrance hall, "What would you say first to your husband, if he came through that door?"

"Tears seem to precede words," After pausing for a while, my wife said, and really wept.

"Your husband will watch this video. Please say what you want to do."

"Mother missed you very much, saying you would definitely return. She passed away in 1983."

My wife wept again. I wondered if it was because she thought of the mother-in-law who had died without hearing from me or because she was sorry for me because of mother's death.

I could clearly see Hyon Ok, my only daughter. I left her as a newborn baby. Now she was a middle-aged woman of over 40. She bore a great resemblance to me, as my wife had said in her letter. She placed first in the national instruction contest. She spoke vividly and well, without reserve, before camera. But when she was asked "When did you most miss your father?", words failed her.

"When I entered the Kim Hyong Jik University of Education my grandmother and mother came with me, but I felt as if a corner of my mind was empty. I thought how good it would be if my father could see me in my university uniform."

Hyon Ok teaches physics at the Kaeson Senior Middle School in Pyongyang.

My son-in-law, O Mun Jae, who married Hyon Ok in 1974, seemed too be reticent and serious. My wife chose a good son-in-law, I thought.

Then my granddaughters Jong Hae and Po Ram and grandson Sung Chol whom I wanted to see even in a dream appeared and introduced themselves and made much ado asking me to return home as soon as possible. At their sight tears suddenly came to my eyes. I, embarrassed, turned my face away. Mr. Kim was wiping away his tears.

I have followed the forerunners to win back the lost country since I was thirteen years old. What have I accomplished in over sixty years that even my grandchildren feel the pain of national division?

After Mr. Pak returned, Mr. Kim bought a video recorder for me. He showed solicitude for me so that I often could see the figure of my wife,

daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren on the screen. However I felt uneasy for no reason and it rather pained me to face the screen. I feared watching the video. When comrades visited me, I only occasionally showed it to them.

Offensive and Defensive Battle for Repatriation of "Old Ri In Mo"

Mr. Kim frequented the interchange department of the Ministry of National Unification to see whether there was progress on the issue of my repatriation. It seemed that north Korea once proposed sending a group comprising my family, friends, doctors and journalists, over 50 in all. One person with the Ministry of National Unification said that my family would be allowed to visit me if I express my wish, saying, "I only invite my family". He said that others would not be allowable because they would be considered as intending to use the issue of my repatriation politically.

I keenly felt that there was still the seed of national strife although high-level talks were held several times and there was much talk about renewed talks. It would be a great pleasure for me to meet my family even for a few days. What would be the attitude of the north Korean side, if I come forth with "I would like only my family to come down", as the south Korean side tells me to do? In that case, it is likely to excite the suspicion that sending of a big group, although I do not want it, is intended to use the issue of my repatriation politically, isn't it? I could never do that. I was a member of the Workers' Party of Korea and a communist before I was an unconverted long-term prisoner and a prisoner of war who was not repatriated at the time of the truce.

I felt the love of the Party and the comrades that took measure to console me by sending my family, friends, doctors and many other people and was grateful for it. I could not comply with the proposal of the south Korean side to invite my family alone, however much I wanted to see them. I wondered whether it was not a sort of betrayal. I was happy to feel the love for me of the Party, comrades and my family. The invitation of my family alone was by no means desirable, even for the reconciliation of the nation. That was why I declined that proposal and the issue of the visiting group has aborted.

Later, the offensive and defensive battle continued between north Korea demanding repatriation of "old Ri In Mo" and south Korea rejecting it. In this whirlpool the way to the homeland now seemed to open widely and then to be barred by a cliff. Some civil official came to me and told

me to pack my belongings and wait and yet another civil official mocked at me, saying, "Don't cherish an idle dream."

If I followed these changes with repeated reversals, I might be no more in this world. Mr. Kim and my comrades feared that repeated hope and its frustration might harm my health. There were some cases in which a person who, sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment, served 19 years in jail and contracted an illness because of impatience and died in the last year.

I stood silent like a rock during the offensive and defensive battle for repatriation of "Ri In Mo", nursing a desire that could not be given up.

Meanwhile, I heard the glad news that the Fifth High-Level Talks were held in Seoul in December of 1991 and the historic document "Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression and Cooperation and Exchange between the North and the South" which embodied the principles of the July 4 Joint Statement was adopted.

Thus one year passed and New Year 1992 dawned.

Kind People

In February of 1992 the Sixth North-South High-Level Talks were held in Pyongyang and the "North-South Agreement" and the "Joint Declaration on Denuclearization" adopted at the fifth talks were made public, which brought joy to the whole nation. But it was short-lived. While saying that they were ready to reconciliate with north Korea, the south Korean authorities maintained the "National Security Law", which regarded the north as an enemy and detained in prison the envoys of reunification, those who had been in north Korea, which caused disappointment to the nation. They had no scruples about hindering the fulfilment of the agreement on the pretext of "nuclear suspicion" towards the north. However, no physical suppression and violence can check the struggle of a whole nation pained by the national division and striving to banish the sorrow of national division. In this situation, the issue of my fate stood out in bold relief as an important aspect of reunification.

Once I received a phone call. It was mid-April of 1992. The girl who phoned me said she was calling on behalf of a journalist with the *Washington Times* and that he had met my family and children during his visit to Pyongyang and had brought the recorded words of greeting they asked him to convey to me.

The journalist was too busy to go down to Jinyong and wanted me to come to Seoul and receive the recorded tape.

I discussed this with Mr. Kim and left for Seoul on April 29.

I had grown weak during the last winter. I am not sure if this was because of the aftereffects of my operation or because of my age. So I found it difficult to walk without help.

Learning of my state, Choe Sang Gun, a diligent reader of *Mal* who lived in Pusan, sent me a van.

Choe Sang Gun was introduced in the south Korean monthly *Mal* as a righteous person who did good things for the unconverted long-term prisoners. According to the article, in his career he had done one thing that he regarded as a great shame. When he attended Pusan University, he joined the student movement and took part in meetings many times. But scared by the violent suppression by police and the threats of university authorities that "those who took part in demonstrations cannot enter the service of a company", he became a bookworm. At that time he received a letter with a drawing of scissors from the students of Rihwa Women's University in Seoul. The letter said that he lost face as a man and so suggested he undergo an operation and wear a skirt. In the early 1990's, he was acquainted with our unconverted long-term prisoners and came to repent bitterly his past in the light of the unbreakable constancy of our comrades. After he made some amount of money he used it to subscribe to newspaper that fought for the democratization of the press and laid bare social injustice and corruption and donated these to the "Pusan Association to Purge Environmental Pollution" which was opposed to the ruling circle and compradore enterprises indifferent to environmental pollution.

After he was acquainted with the long-term prisoners, he helped them materially and spiritually and cared for them more than children did for their parents. In this light it was nothing new that he sent us a van.

Just then a van was badly needed to gather leftovers from restaurants in the city to be used to feed Comrade Han's ducks and to transport eggs. Mr. Choe sent his van so that it was used in the duck-run at ordinary times and I used it when I made long journey.

Jo Yong Sam, who worked together in Han's duck-run, drove the van and he, Mr. Kim and I arrived in Seoul that evening. That night we stayed in a hotel and the next day, on the morning of the 30th of April, I went to Kungjong Church as arranged by the journalist from the *Washington Times*. Mrs. Pak and the missionary Ri met me gladly.

After a while, Sin Ok Ja arrived. At that time, on her advice, I was going to submit a written appeal to the International Red Cross Society. Meanwhile, Sin Ok Ja and members of the Council of Remedial Measure for Long-term Prisoners based in Germany sent letters asking for help in

securing my repatriation to the Red Cross on several occasions. The Red Cross replied, "It intends to offer humanitarian aid and wants to ascertain the intention of the person in question beforehand." So I wrote a letter expressing my will. That day Sin made and brought an English version of the letter. I posted the letter addressed to the Red Cross. Mrs. Pak and the missionary Ri set out a tasty lunch. I had a square meal and was enjoying fruit when a blue-eyed and yellow-haired journalist arrived with an interpreter.

He said that he was greatly interested in the issue of long-term prisoners in south Korea. It pained him that I was still separated from my wife, he said. That was why on a visit to Pyongyang he took the trouble to look for my wife's house, have an interview and write a story about me and my wife. With a view to consoling me, he brought the tape that had captured the words of greeting from my wife, daughter and grandson Sung Chol. Thus saying, he played the tape and held the earphone to my ear.

I heard the voice of my dear wife. "Hyon Ok's father, please take care of yourself and stay healthy."

It was followed by the solid voice of Hyon Ok. "...Father, you must definitely return home even in consideration of Mother who has waited for you all her life. I believe we will definitely meet you this year...."

Next I heard the voice of dear Sung Chol. "Sung Chol, who most respects Grandfather, is speaking. I am impatiently waiting for you to return home, looking up at your photograph when I am at home. How good it would be if you return home and go together to see the blue waters of the River Taedong, eat noodles and have a good time! I believe you will definitely return home. Grandpa, please return as soon as possible."

I suddenly clasped the journalist's hand, which held the earphone to my ear and thanked him earnestly. He seemed to have understood my intention even without interpretation. He held my hands in his and was very much pleased. After returning to his homeland he would make an appeal to different human rights organizations concerning my issue, he said. The tragedy of the divided nation seemingly pained the heart of this Westerner. He groped in his pocket and put cheque for 100,000 *won* in my hand and went away.

Quite a few people donated money to me after I was released from the hospital in July of 1991. Whenever I received money sent by fellow countrymen in the homeland and those living in Germany and the United States, which they collected penny by penny, my heart raced, moved by the patriotic love shown by those strangers. But that day, when a man of

a different nationality and race extended his warm hand to me, I did not know what to say. Goodness inherent in man transcends ideology and nationality, I now believe.

The next day I went to the people's medicinal decoction house run by the comrades released from prison and met the comrades I wanted to see.

In the afternoon, on Mr. Kim's proposal, we joined Comrade Choe Nam Gyu, recently working in the medicinal decoction house, and went to the River Han to take a pleasure boat ride. Visiting Seoul after a long interval and being together with the comrades, whose minds I could guess without words, afforded more pleasure to me than boating.

Silla Hotel

On May 3, I began the journey home from Seoul. Mr. Kim unexpectedly said to me, "Now that you are here, please visit your junior in Kangnung before returning." In Kangnung there lived my junior who made a home by his own hand after undergoing hardships. I had not seen him since I met him when he visited me in the rest house after reading articles in *Mal*. There was no reason for me to decline his suggestion.

The car entered the Yongdong express motorway. To tell the truth, this was the first time for me to cross Taegwan Pass. Thaebaek Mountains looked majestic. When I reached Kangnung, Un Ha met me gladly. Un Ha treated me to Kangnung delicacies and then I saw the sights along the east coast.

At first we stopped at Kulsan Temple in Myongju County. Mr. Kim seemed to be well acquainted with the place. Towards the close of the Silla Dynasty, the high priest Pom Il entered the temple at the age of 42, abandoning a high governmental position at the centre of authority like wornout shoes, and practised Buddhist meditation facing the wall for 39 years. However, there was no knowing where the high priest of Silla went and the site of the temple became ruins.

"What do you think he meditated about facing the wall for 39 years?" Mr. Kim said.

There seemed to be similarity between this man who practised Buddhist meditation with a will for 39 years and myself, a man who maintained constancy of faith for 34 years in prison, he said. Standing on the ruins, I was absorbed in speculation about what the high priest groped with one thousand years ago.

Then we did the sights for three days as Songgang Jong Chol did. We

visited Jukso Pavilion in Samchok and the Tosan Lecture-Hall in Andong. Now I thought that we were going to turn towards home. Mr. Kim unexpectedly said, "Let's visit the place where the high-level talks are held."

I already knew the news that the Seventh North-South High-Level Talks had started. This was on May 5, and the delegation of the north side was staying at the Silla Hotel. If I had been in Jinyong, police detectives would have kept coming and going and I would have been affected by the atmosphere of the talks. Although I was leisurely taking in the sights, I did not forget this for even a moment.

Mr. Kim had already guessed what was on my mind. I immediately replied, "Let's go." In ordinary times I would have been worried about Mr. Kim's health before anything else lest I cause him trouble. But at that time I was very excited and forgot even that. I was very grateful that he had guessed my thought. The car again headed for Seoul.

I wanted to stand in front of the Silla Hotel and wave to the people from the homeland, even from a distance. If I had seen the dear people from the dear land with my eyes even once, even if I could not address them, if I had come near the hotel where they stayed and breathed the air there at least, I would have been satisified. It did not occur to me that at that time police was frantically looking for me. When talks had been held in the past, police had come and guarded my house. As they had had no proper place to stay in the country, they had at times taken me to see the sights in the neighbourhood. I had phoned Mrs. Kim to the effect that I would get tired with different matters if I stayed home during the talks this time and so I would visit sights along the east coast before return home. The police would suppose so, I thought.

But how naive the thought was! At about ten o'clock on the morning of the 7th of May our car pulled up in front of the gate of the Silla Hotel. Jo Yong Sam, who drove the car said, "Checking is being done at the front gate". A few cars were in a line in front of the gate. Mr. Jo placed his van at the tail of the line. At the moment about one hundred riot policemen rushed out and surrounded the van. They broke the windshield and pulled the three of us out. In a moment riot policemen held me up and carried me to the nearby Jangchung Indoor Stadium. I fainted. Luckily a journalist with *Hangyore Sinmun* followed us to cover the event, but was caught by police detectives and driven away.

After a while we were placed in a police car, which entered the express motorway. When we asked where we were going, their reply was that they were taking us to our home. But we arrived at a hotel in Changwon. They told us to take a rest there until the delegation from the north returned on the next day. However, I alone returned to the house in Jiny-

ong on the evening of the eighth of May when the delegation from the north returned. They said that Mr. Kim and Mr. Jo would be sent back the next day because their interrogation had not ended. But Mr. Kim alone returned home on the evening of the eighth. He had heard from the police that Jo had returned home before him. Upon arriving at home, he asked "When was Jo released?"

Surrounded by Police

Something unusual must have happened, I thought. The next morning I read a newspaper that said that Mr. Jo was being detained. It further said that Jo drove the car in disregard of the police cordon and injured a policeman. It was sheer nonsense. The conduct of the south Korean authorities was too mean to even be qualified as shameless. If it had gone against their grain that I went there, they ought to have imprisoned me, the source of the issue, but instead detained a person who was not guilty, shifting the blame onto him. How absurd! Their actions were mean and outrageous. If they fear an old man seeing the delegation of his homeland, what pluck had they when they put the seal to the agreement with the north on reconciliation?

I was displeased with the case of Jo. On top of it, sometime after blame was attached even to Comrade Han who ran the duck farm. The investigators checked where the van had come from. During the inquiry, the name Choe Sang Gun was mentioned and they found out that he helped long-term prisoners. They planned to alienate Comrade Han, who was nearest me from me, a long-term prisoner whom Mr. Choe Sang Gun had helped.

The county office suddenly sent notice to Comrade Han to the effect that his duck-run should be removed as it was an unauthorized structure. At the same time the person concerned in the county office informed the police about Han. At this Mr. Kim said with excitement, "Charges ought to be made in the case in which removal is not carried out in the set time after the notice is given. This is not the proper way of administration." He went to the county office to negotiate a solution. Comrade Han's duck-run was not large-sized and there were no people's complaints as to damage incurred by it. In the light of the cases of other people, there was no ground whatsoever for him to be served with a removal notice. Nevertheless, the county office was adamant. After several rounds of altercation the date of removal was set as the 30th of June. Comrade Han had to remove over 2,000 ducks in five install-

ments. I was sorry for Comrade Han and was angered at what the county office had done.

Wiretapping of my house was frequently committed. After I had been in front of the Silla Hotel, many journalists visited me. It was arranged to ask for interviews for news coverage beforehand. So it goes without saying that if the telephone in Mr. Kim's house was tapped, the authorities knew who had been in the home. When the journalists who had been in Jinyong had nearly complete their articles, the Agency for National Security Planning usually conveyed its demands that the news coverage be suspended. In that case some journalists apologized for the omission of the article over the phone and yet some others conveyed that the company head was at a loss as to what to do and they did not know what would become of the article.

None of the journalists who had been in Jinyong seemed to have spoken ill of me in their articles. They were young and sympathized with me, irrespective of their ideology. Those who abused me using the argument of the Cold War days were mainly the commentators and the editors of the news companies. So the Agency for National Security Planning was displeased with the continuous pouring out of articles written by these young reporters.

In fact, I was more frequently put in a state of house arrest. In late May, I was invited to a function arranged by Jondaehyop (National Council of Student Representative) and held at Hanyang University in Seoul from the 27th of that month. The day after I received the call, six police cars surrounded my house. They stayed there for a week and withdrew only when the function arranged by Jondaehyop had ended.

A lecture meeting was arranged for the 15th of June and on invitation Comrade So Jun Sik was to come down to Masan. Policemen trooped to my house. They probably supposed that I would attend the meeting. This was a frequent occurrence. So recently even the youngest one Yong Suk became indifferent to the coming and going of policemen.

Staying in the room, I heard the words exchanged between policemen and Mr. Kim. It was ridiculous talks.

"If So Jun Sik comes down this time, isn't he expected to come here?"

"He came to Masan. He will make a courtesy call to you, won't he?"

"Isn't he a Red spy?"

"If he comes, I will introduce you to him. See for yourself if he is Red or Blue."

The next day Comrade So called on us as was expected. Comrade Kim introduced Comrade So to the policemen as he promised. After his return they said, "He looked modest and did not seem to be a spy."

Young Smiles Suppressed by the Eviction Team

Around that time reporters from the Japanese N.H.K Broadcasting Station phoned me two times and said that they would visit me but did not come. I did not know why. I wondered why the journalists who had always kept their promises failed to do so this time. Was the problem with the telephone? Meanwhile, Mrs. Moon Myong Ja, a member of the press in the United States unexpectedly visited me without notice. She said that she was on the way home from Seoul, where she stopped over after she gathered materials in Pyongyang. In Seoul, she was told that if she informed me about her visit beforehand, a troublesome thing might occur, so she came only inquiring of my address, she said.

Mrs. Moon was sixty four years old, an American citizen, and a representative of the US Asian News Service. When she visited Pyongyang in late April, she had an exclusive interview with President Kim Il Sung.

When I talked with her, I found that she was simple and did not have a feel of aloofness, peculiar to famous people, about her. She expressed her sympathy with me because I could not return home and told me about Pyongyang in detail as she had seen it. Listening to her story about my homeland, I shed tears inspite of myself in front of a woman I had just met. She was also old, so it seemed that I did so, thawing to her.

Mrs. Moon brought to me a package of beef boiled in soysauce that she prepared and told me to eat a great deal and be healthy until I could return home.

The next day policemen came and asked me about Mrs. Moon's visit.

From the 18th of June on, police investicators came to Mr. Kim's house everyday and began to check on those who visited us. Considering that there was no special function or meeting, it seemed to be intended to bar the unannounced access of journalists.

Several days later journalists from KBS Telecasting Station visited me. Luckily they came after the investigators had left the house. So they passed safely. That evening they finished their interviews. As they said that the pictures should be taken when it is light, I told them to come early in the morning. Early the next morning they came and finished their work. As they were leaving, they ran into the investigators who were coming to my house. They rushed upon the journalists to wrestle the film from them, which resulted in a fight. The journalists resisted them stubbornly, so they left safely without their film being taken away.

This led the investigators to introduce a system of 24-hour surveil-

lance beginning the next day. They had to have a hard time of it. They had to eat and sleep for 24 hours in the cars under the hot sun. Mr. Kim was sorry to see them in such a state and vacated a room of the house on the opposite side for them. In turn they were asked not to show up in the house on this side. Several days later the students who were studying for an examination there left packing their belongings, probably irritated by the police. These students, who came over and served lunch for me when Mr. Kim was away from home, had lost their study room because of me. I was a troublesome old man.

Comrade Han profusely sweated to remove the duck-run in the sun. He found a place to move to with difficulty after looking for a proper place for a good while.

He had to work without rest to build a new duck-run and to feed the ducks. At last the 30th of June, the date of eviction, came. All the duck-run was removed. Only the two-roomed makeshift hut where comrade Han and Jo Yong Sam had lived remained. Members of the eviction team suddenly came rushing in while Comrade Han was setting the table, intending to remove it after lunch. Comrade Han resisted them, saying, "Doesn't the notice say within today? What's the matter?". But they pulled down the makeshift hut in a moment. Comrade Han had been disassembling the duck-run with great care, to save all the useful materials. I wonder what a sharp pain this caused him.

On moving there Comrade Han himself skillfully built the hut to live in. The makeshift hut was built firmly, but the walls were not papered. I do not know whether he had no leeway to give thought to it or he regarded papering as a luxury. Ji Hyon who nursed me in the hospital in the summer of 1991 came to Jinyong and saw Mr. Han's walls were pasted with newspapers. Later she came with male students from Pusan University, bringing nice wallpaper with her and papering the walls with it. When I entered the room, I heard the merry laughter they raised while pasting the wallpaper. The members of the eviction team destroyed the room recklessly and took away even their sounds of laughter. They were taking away one by one those around me who helped and consoled me. Who would be next?

Days of Waiting

It became continuously more difficult to see people because of the police presence. A journalist from *Hangyore Sinmun* was sent away from the door. The journalist Kaki from *Asahi Simbun* in Japan was allowed to

exchange greetings with me because he had come from a distant place, but was eventually driven away.

It was the same in the cases of other visitors. Only the demonstrators with the Free General Association, who cried "The Red, leave Kimhae!", were allowed to visit.

On July 7, I listened to the radio broadcast of the prime minister's letter addressed to the north, sitting alone in my room, unable to receive visitors. The speech abounded in fine words, like humanism and mutualism, but its gist was, "the south is ready to send Ri In Mo and other long-term prisoners to the north if the north returns several hundred south Korean people it has kidnapped so far."

The next day I read newspaper comments on the letter. The hard-liners and moderates within the government held different views concerning the issue of my repatriation, and in the final analysis, the opinion of the hard-liners of the Ministry of Justice and Agency for National Security Planning carried the day. Namely, the south in fact refused my repatriation, advancing terms that could by no means be accepted by the north.

The south maintained the stand that several hundred fishermen and plane crews had been kidnapped and were being detained by the north. But the north refused to give even an inch, insisting that they entered the north of their own accord. Such being the situation, it is no exaggeration to say that the south chose the impossible terms by demanding they be returned.

Reading the newspaper I pounded my chest. It was not only because I became anxious at my return home being delayed. It was also because I saw the revived specter of the Cold War in the prime minister's letter. I heard rumors of Cold War attitudes, which were thought to have disappeared with the conclusion of the historic "North-South Agreement" early in that year, had revived and what the advocates of Cold War policies within the government said concerning the issue of my repatriation.

They asked: "Is there any need to help the Red lawbreaker? Moreover, it will benefit the north to repatriate him. Let him grow old and die, isolating him from society forever."

It was in 1952 that I became a "lawbreaker" in south Korean society. In south Korea, a war correspondent is a civilian belonging to a newspaper company, while, a war correspondent of north Korea is a regular army soldier belonging to the Department of Culture of the People's Army. I was thrown into prison as a lawbreaker without being treated as a prisoner of war on the pretext that I conducted guerrilla activity for more than six months detached from my unit before I was taken prisoner in 1952. This was in blatant violation of the Geneva Convention. Not only I,

but almost all the People's Army soldiers who engaged in guerrilla activity were excluded from the repatriation of prisoners of war and came under the application of the "acts benefiting the enemy" in accordance with the National Defence Law.

In 1991, when the north demanded my repatriation, the lawful repatriation of a prisoner of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention, the south insisted, "He is not a prisoner of war." Of course, if the south admits that I am a prisoner of war, it has to repatriate me. So it by no means can admit this point. However, if it denies it, there must be a certain coherent ground. I was very anxious to know what this ground was.

Once a journalist with *Mal* asked Prof. Ri Jang Hui of the Hanguk University of Foreign Languages, a specialist in international law, to give an interpretation of my identity. His answer was, "Mr. Ri In Mo is a prisoner of war." I have never been given a clear explanation of why I was not considered a prisoner of war.

While I was being prevented by the police from contact with outsiders, some newspapers reported that a written document from my interrogations conducted in 1952 had surfaced. According to this document, I was a Second Lieutenant of the People's Army and a military instructor with the South Kyongsang Provincial Party and had murdered honest people, committed arson and plunder, and engaged in guerrilla activity on Mount Jiri during the period of retreat. It said that I invented the title of war correspondent to receive a lighter punishment during my trial.

I would like to put a question to those people who make such a remark.

How could I be sentenced to seven years of imprisonment, as the document points out, the lightest punishment on the military trial during the war, when such heavy punishments as capital punishment to those sitting in the front row and life imprisonment to those in the back row were inflicted indiscriminately?

In addition, another newspaper carried another version. According to this report, "Ri In Mo is a high-ranking officer of the People's Army disguised as a war correspondent." I was engaged in propaganda work when a new country was being built after liberation. Drawing on experience in this, I was active as a war correspondent at the front. I printed a newspaper even on Mount Jiri and continuously wrote after my release from prison. Even living in prison for 34 years, I refreshed my memory with the only thought that I should record the facts when I could. This shows that I followed one road, so to speak, all my life. So, why so much talk about my career as a war correspondent, which is not a high government position? Is it because it was not the noncombatant war correspon-

dent but the combatant guerrilla who had been a Second Lieutenant of the People's Army that was the lawbreaker who deserves no sympathy?

"Ri In Mo should not be allowed to return home because it will benefit north Korea." Such arguments saddened me even more. I also heard the following argument: "If Ri In Mo, who maintained his socialist ideology without yielding through all kinds of trials is repatriated to the north, he will be made a hero by the north Korean authorities, which will play a big role in the ideological unity of the north Korean people. This will benefit north Korea and impair south Korea."

Of course, those who advocated "anticommunism" all their life might not approve of sending me home as long as they basically do not change their views of the value they maintained all their life. However, today the brothers who fought each other, a rifle in hand, put an end to Cold War confrontations, which lasted for half a century, and agreed to enter an era of reconciliation and peace. What does this era demand of the nation of 70 million?

If I said that in those dark days I did not want to go to Pyongyang, where my wife and children lived, it would be a lie. It was more painful now that I had heard from my wife and family than it had been when I lived in the dark.

I had one more earnest desire than to return home as early as possible. This was the genuine reconciliation of the nation and the peaceful reunification of the country. Cherishing this desire, I sat like a rock in the south-facing room in Mr. Kim's house.

My hand trembling, in those days I was in no state to write. I was having trouble thinking clearly. I wondered whether it was the aftereffects of the operation I underwent in 1991. Even if the police did not keep guard, where could I go with lame legs that barely carried me to the toilet? In brief, in those days I could do nothing to bring closer the day I longed for.

With hands, legs and head incapacitated, I had nothing to do but to wait patiently. There is a saying, "Patience moves the heavens." I continued waiting, hoping that the earnest waiting, to which an incapacitated old man devoted his last energy, would become the warmth that would thaw the barrier of national division.

11. THE LAST SIX MONTHS

The Fifth Autumn

The autumn of 1992 was the fifth autumn of my release from prison. I greeted it in waiting. Waiting that autumn, too, was in vain.

With the advent of autumn my health rapidly worsened. My consciousness often became blurred and sometimes I was in a state of coma and insensible to the change of my surroundings for hours. I wondered whether this was an effect of my operation. Moreover, the impediment in speech, which I suffered at times, became constant and I could utter each word only with great effort. I could barely take one or two steps, leaning against a wall or the side post of the door.

Worried, Mr. Kim and his wife took care of me with their whole heart, but the decline in my health could not be prevented.

Nevertheless, the police hung around Mr. Kim's house and the cries of demonstrators urging me to immediately leave Kimhae did not cease.

Coming to the end of his patience, Mr. Kim told the policemen lingering about the door, "Look here. Isn't this too much for this old man, who is in bad health and moves with difficulties?" At this they would evade reply, saying, "We know that. But it is the instructions of the authorities." If the demonstrators who shouted to me to go away had been asked. "Isn't this too much?" they would most likely have replied with the same words.

I more than once heard people in south Korea say, "It cannot be helped, it is the instructions of the authorities," when they found it difficult to reply, or when they were placed in an awkward situation.

Many prison guards would have replied in such a way if they were reasoned with in a quiet place.

It seemed to be a characteristic feature of the south Korean people not to identify themselves with the authorities. In this light, those who complied with the authorities for their comfort while not approving of them were like the policemen and demonstrators and those who refused to comply with the instruction of the authorities were the champions of the democracy movement. Briefly speaking, everyone draws a line of demarcation between himself and the authorities. On recollection it is an inevitable outcome. In an attempt to abolish the line of demarcation,

Park Jung Hee clamoured about "national review" during his 18 years of rule, but finally went to the other world, forsaken by his own people. Chon Doo Hwan also tried to cross the line of demarcation, crying for "national unity", but was driven to Paekdam Temple. Roh Tae Woo had to take a step back and is, sue a "statement of democratization". The successive rulers of south Korea could not prevent their alienation from the people with "national review", "national unity" or a "statement of democratization." This distance will never disappear so long as they do not change their flunkeyist, traitorous and splittist attitudes. After all, "national unity" in south Korea can be said to be a castle built on shifting sands.

The words "our leader", "our dear leader", "our Party and government of the Republic" made a deep impression on me when I came over to north Korea. Of course, my comrades and I had spoken about "our General", "our Party and government" for five years after liberation and regarded ourselves as a part of the Party and government.

However, I lived apart from that life for 43 years. My memory of it was growing dim. I do not know how to express my feelings when I heard these words after first arriving in north Korea.

An apt expression is "Good! Really good world!" I recently say this often in spite of myself, everywhere I go.

Our strength lies in these short words, "our leader", "our dear leader", "our Party and government of the Republic".

Many people in south Korea do not understand this. They are sometimes tempted by the words "unification under a liberal democratic system" because they do not realize that in north Korea the authorities are identified with the people. They have no idea of the single-hearted unity of our society, in which people say "our leader" and "our dear leader" while the leader and the dear leader say "our people". But the south Korean people know only an enforced obedience to the authorities. Such reality was in front of me "put under house arrest" in Sinryong-ri, Jinyong Sub-County, Kimhae County.

My comrades or journalists who came to meet me were not allowed to enter the house and it was inconceivable for me to go out to meet them. The authorities made Mr. Kim's house a "prison for Ri In Mo".

I was placed under house arrest, so to speak. I could not have hoped of returning to north Korea. I could clearly see the intention of the south Korean authorities not to return me in the incident in front of the Silla Hotel and my expulsion to an island off the southern coast.

Moreover, my health was getting worse. Shadows of anxiety thickened on the face of Mr. Kim, who strove to find a way out.

One day, toward the end of September, Mr. Kim entered my room with an unusually bright face.

"Mr. Ri, here is good news for you. You will be returned to your native land!", he blurted out excitedly. At the eighth high-level talks held in Pyongyang in mid-September the head of the north's delegation requested the settlement of my repatriation within that year. The head of the south's delegation made a proposal to set up a meeting place for displaced families at Panmunjom and to repatriate me at the first meeting and the north agreed. At the meeting of the representatives at Panmunjom held on September 25 the establishment of a meeting place for displaced families and my repatriation were agreed upon.

"This time it seems to be sure!"

All members of Mr. Kim's family were pleased to hear this.

Ki Jin asked regretfully, "Then I must part from grandfather?" which made all of them laugh.

"What is to be done? You ought to be in good health and meet your family," said Mrs. Kim. At this I replied, "My illness will be immediately cured when I see my family." After reply I felt sorry, realizing that it may sound as if I meant that I was ill because their care was not as good as my family's. But Mr. and Mrs. Kim understood my remark and sincerely sympathized with me.

That night I was seized with thousands of thoughts.

A week later, in early October; the south put forward the demand for the return of those "kidnapped by the north", thus bringing the meeting of the representatives to a premature close. That day, Mr. Kim and his family looked embarrassed and were at a loss, not knowing how to console me.

I was not really surprised. It was the unavoidable outcome.

The south declared that it would defer carrying out any agreement between the south and the north if the "nuclear issue" was not settled. Soon after returning from the seventh talks held in Seoul, at which it agreed upon even the date for exchanging elderly parents visiting groups, the south launched the joint military exercise "Focus Lens" with the United States in the area of the Demilitarized Zone where the visiting groups were to cross.

Historically viewed, soon after the signing of the July 4 Joint Statement, the south reversed it, saying that "We cannot bet our fate on a piece of paper" and even after signing the north-south agreement, the south prattled before the ink dried that "it is merely a gentlemen's agreement" that it may or may not carry out. Every puppy barks at its birth. So successive Presidents were all the same.

As the south Korean people have commented, for the person in

authority everything was a temporary "political show" designed to prolong his power. From olden times, a ruler is said to regard the people as the heavens, but south Korean Presidents placed their lust for power before the fate of the nation and the people.

I did not consider the issue of my repatriation simply as the issue of whether I would return home or not. I thought that it presented a stepping stone symbolizing the reconciliation and concord between the north and the south.

However, the south disrupted the meeting of the representatives. I wondered if it did not simply mean the shelving of the issue of repatriation, but cast dark clouds over the reconciliation and concord between the north and the south. I did not tell my thoughts to Mr. Kim. It was not only because of the impediment of my speech, but because I wanted to avoid talk that might involve Mr. Kim and his family members in the iron meshes of the National Security Law.

A few days later, on the 5th of October, the shocking results of an investigation in the case of the Workers' Party of South Korea by the Agency for National Security Planning was announced.

I heard the announcement on television. It said the case have been revealed in the process of investigating the Kim Rak Jong spy case in early September. The announcement was utterly absurd. It said that the Workers' Party of South Korea was a local branch in south Korea of the Workers' Party of Korea consisting of four regional branches in the central part of the country, Kyongin, Ryongnam and Honam and had infiltrated all walks of life with a view to achieving "communized reunification" by 1995 and acted on "directions from the north" with aims of bringing about the withdrawl of the US army and nuclear weapons, abolition of the National Security Act, discontinuance of suppression of democratic forces, cessation of public-security-oriented rule, the establishment of a democratic government, and reunification by a confederation. All these were the aims of struggle of the democratic forces in south Korea, particularly, the youths and students. It attributed the activity of all democratic forces in south Korea to the "directions from the north."

It is noteworthy that while publishing the announcement, the Agency for National Security Planning admitted the fact that in the past it had announced spy ring cases, linking these with the unrest in the internal political situation and stirred up discontent in the nation. But this time it added ample justification to make people believe the results of the investigation without any suspicion. It reminded one of an old tale, "A miser hid money in the corner of his yard, and whenever he met people, he said. "you may think I hid money in the yard, but I did not."

It was quite evident that it was designed for the suppression of the opposition democratic forces on the eve of the Presidential elections. When the Presidential elections were held, it went so far as to say the north gave the direction to support the candidate from the Democratic Party. It was so evident that people blushed when they heard the remark. The south Korean people would say, "If the authorities need a spy case, one is found."

I was made the scapegoat for proving Park Jung Hee's staunch anti-communist spirit on the charge of offering money to an underground party organization I did not know myself.

Disgusted, I turned off the television. It was evidently another dark cloud imperilling the concord between the north and the south. As expected, the situation was aggravated as the days went by. In early November, south Korea launched the large-scale joint military exercises "Hwarang" and "Eagle 92", thus bringing the situation to extreme confrontation. Simultaneously, all north-south talks were suspended.

The South Korean Red Cross Society announced that I had remained in south Korea voluntarily during the war and later participated in an anti-government plot. They went on to say I was not a POW and that my case was not to be dealt with as a humanitarian issue, but to be settled politically by proper authorities.

I gave up hope. The north-south talks were in a state of suspension and in the light of the development of the situation I could not guess when the talks might be resumed. I did not want to be used in political bargaining by the south Korean authorities.

Then fifth autumn, which once gave me hope, passed in this way, bringing me to despair. This was my issue and, at the same time, the hope and despair of the concord of the nation.

At that time I could not rise from my bed. Almost all day long I lay in bed and often was delirious and sometimes was seized with hallucinations. Sometimes I writhed at the illusion of being tortured in the prison, and at times saw myself dying on a secluded island. An illusion of the departed comrades occurred to me. I realized that death was in store for me. The land and my close friends I missed for 43 years were receding from my grasp.

A Telephone Call

One day I received a telephone call. I was in bed, and Mr. Kim answered the call. Originally the telephone had been by my side, but Mr.

Kim had moved it out of my room as my condition grew worse. It was partly because its ringing got on my nerves, but mainly because often the calls were threatening.

Intimidating phone calls urged me to leave Kimhae, as the demonstrators demanded. Several times I got such calls, but I said nothing to Mr. Kim and his wife. Once Mr. Kim got a threatening phone call, so it became known.

Mr. Kim took the phone from my room at once. He told his family members to inquire who was speaking in case a phone call came for me and then allow me to receive it.

That day, too, Mrs. Ri answered the phone and asked: "Who is speaking? You know him well? His health is now in a very bad state. You know this?"

I could see that it was a phone call for me. She opened the door and with a look she asked whether I would take the call. I nodded. She said, "Wait a minute, please" and brought the telephone into the room handing me the receiver.

"I do not know who he is. He says he knows you well."

I took the call, lying in bed. An unfamiliar voice said: "Hello, is this Mr. Ri In Mo?" I thought that it was a phone call from a comrade of mine, but from his first words I felt a coldness and fake kindness, like in a sneer. My eyesight had become weak and I had developed a speech impediment, but my hearing had become keener instead.

When I said it was I, he asked my health. Displeased at the superfluous inquiry, because I heard Mr. Ri tell him this, I told him to state his business. Then an unexpected remark rang out from the receiver.

"Mr. Ri, even now you had better think it over? Don't you want to meet your wife and daughter? You insist on adhering to your faith, but you know communist governments in the East European countries have collapsed, don't you? Only the communist government of north Korea remains. The Soviet Union disappeared and the Kremlin is now a bastion of the free world. How long can the north Korean communist government last? Now the United States and the free world are putting the final pressure on it. It is only a matter of time. It will exist not longer than your life. Then, what is the use of faith? Don't you see this?"

He spoke in an ingratiating Seoul dialect. I wanted to shout, but my voice failed me.

I must have looked very grim then. Entering my room, Mrs. Ri was surprised to see me and took the receiver from my hand. This happened after the call had already ended. She did not ask what the telephone call was about.

She felt sorry, saying, "I was not careful enough. I have to inquire closely before letting you take a call." She seemed to have supposed that it was another threatening telephone call like the one she accepted before. I did not want to clarify its content, so I did not tell Mr. Kim about it.

There was nothing new about it. Reality was noisier and harsher than the voice in the telephone call.

What a great to-do people in South Korea made about the ruin of socialism in Eastern Europe and particularly about the collapse of the Soviet Union! Newspapers, magazines and television made special mention of the news, qualified the collapse of the Soviet Union as the "fall of communism" and praised the eternity of the Free World.

I do not know how to express the feelings I experienced when I heard it... It exceeded the surprise and frustration I experienced when I heard the news of the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese Nonagreession Pact during the Japanese imperialist rule over Korea. What to say about my feeling at the news that the flag of the Soviet Union, which hung over the Kremlin for over 70 years, was sold at auction for 30,000 DM and was to be exhibited in an anti-socialist exhibition in Germany?

My comrades and I shed blood, devoted our youth and laid down our lives without hesitation to establish a unified socialist country on this land. The south Korean authorities described "unification by prevailing over communism" as ensured and spoke much about German-style "unification by absorption" as only a question of time.

They spoke again and again about the blockade and pressure imposed on north Korea, as if crying for joy.

Many south Korean people openly expressed doubts about how north Korea was holding out against such a blockade and the increasing pressure without being stifled. Any other country in the world would not have continued to exist under such pressure, even for a few days.

The fifth autumn was the hardest time in my life. Everything around me was ceaselessly striking at me to pull down the pillar of my beliefs.

The unidentified telephone call was only one blow.

However, I believed that my motherland, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, would never sway. It was a belief in the General who had won the 20-year-long fight against the 1,000,000-strong Kwantung Army without any external support. It was a belief in the invincible strength of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which repulsed the imperialist allied forces in the June 25 War and made the arrogant United States apologise at the time of the *Pueblo* Incident. It was the belief that as long as there is the General and as long as the great

Comrade Kim Jong Il, who is held as a symbol of the firmest anti-imperialist and anti-US attitude by the south Korean people, our Republic would defend socialism to the end.

That night I looked back on 20 years under Japanese rule and five years after liberation. I had enjoyed five years of happiness, five years of joy, after the years that cost us blood and tears. This made me believe in the eternity of our Republic, the homeland of my faith.

Some may not believe, if I say that that night I sang a song inwardly, recalling five years of life after liberation. If one has not lived alone behind enemy lines, one could not know the strength of a song that recalls the happiness one has enjoyed.

I sang the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* to myself.

I had sung this song many times in the five years after liberation and when I advanced south with the People's Army and in the snowy nights on Mount Jiri.

Some time ago, when I looked at the Arch of Triumph in Pyongyang, I sang the song and was applauded by my nurse, doctor and people around me. But I don't think they could know what I was thinking. I thought of my whole life and my comrades' lives and of the night I spent in agony during that fifth autumn...

I remember what Mr. Kim said to console me in my room, worried by the story he heard from his wife.

"Do not think too much, please. The *Hangyorye Sinmun* , too, is raising its voice against the pressures put on you."

He showed me an article in *Hangyorye Sinmun* always warmed one's heart in seeking the reconciliation and concord of the one nation.

"Overlook such phone calls as idle talk. I know you may be displeased. But please forget it at once."

Mr. Kim thought it was a threatening call. I did not attempt to explain he was wrong. To think it over, there was nothing specially unpleasant about the phone call, for reality was harsher than the words.

Roh Tae Woo openly said that "the outside obstacles to unification were removed with the promotion of the opening policy towards the north." There is no need to refer to his ignorance of the historical fact that the outside hinderances to national reunification are the United States and Japan. It was clear that in his remarks he was vaunting "unification by prevailing over communism". How many literate men shouted for joy repeating the words of Roh Tae Woo and the authorities?

They clamoured that communism had fallen and all that remained was free democracy. In this vortex, many personages from opposition parties gave up their struggles and made compromises with the government.

At that time I often came to think that the authorities released me from prison not because I had become an invalid, but because they wanted to make a false show of the democratic character of their regime and expected that the social atmosphere in south Korea and the trend of the world situation would convert me. The 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Hungary and the Soviet Union from the Communist Bloc, the ensuing collapse of the socialist system in Eastern Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of the United States as the only superpower–these facts turned quite a few heads in south Korea. As the United States became the only superpower, they clamoured as if south Korea, too, had become a superpower. It can be likened to an ass in lion's skin.

They might have thought that it would not have any influence if they released some "Reds" from prison. I believe they thought that we would give up and convert.

Frankly speaking, it is true that at times I felt frustration and was in low spirits.

However, I felt strength again when the police crowded before the door and the demonstrators from the Liberal Federation appeared. South Korean-style "free democracy" doubtlessly was irritated because of me. The "Reds" seemed to still be dangerous. This was enough for me. What more could I have desired since I was born a communist and became an invalid? If the enemy hates me, doesn't it mean that I am taking the right path and am still alive?

The phone call that day again awakened me. Though belatedly, I want to clarify this point to those fellows from the Liberal Federation who devised such calls and must have shouted for joy.

I remember that later I received no such intimidating phone calls. There is no way for me to know whether such phone call ended or if Mr. Kim's family intercepted them.

The Last Winter

This winter was my 43rd and last winter in south Korea. I knew it would be my last winter, not because I thought I would leave south Korea, but because I thought I would leave this world. My health grew worse and worse, and sometimes I passed an entire day in a delirious state. My hands trembled and I felt detached from them. So I could not even think of writing. I often found myself becoming senile, forgetting things that had just happened. Once I was asleep or in a delirious state.

When I opened my eyes, I found Mr. Kim and his wife watching me. The latter suddenly stood up hastily turning her head. Tears were rolling down from her eyes. Perhaps she was weeping, pained at the thought that I would not survive until I was reunited with my family.

Winter is quite mild on the southern coast. But it seemed to me that this winter was the coldest in my life. When my mind was clear, I read several books. Every day Mr. Kim put newspapers, magazines and novels near my bed.

So Jun Sik and other comrades came to see me and in many cases when they returned they left one or two books for me.

One day I read a disgusting news item in the press. On January 12, the traitor Ri Wan Yong's great-grandson brought to a local civil court in Seoul a lawsuit concerning the transfer of land ownership and the court decided to return the land to him because the land his great-grandfather had owned under Japanese imperialist rule had been inherited by him. Ri Wan Yong bought the land with the money he gained by selling his nation. The point at issue was that the trial was resumed several times and his great-grandson already legally recovered a lot of land and property and was living in luxury.

Meanwhile, An Min Saeng, martyr An Jung Gun's descendant, who was living in Taegu, North Kyongsang Province, had underwent ten years of imprisonment during Park Jung Hee's rule although he had lost his leg in the struggle against the Japanese imperialists, and is now not allowed even to see his relatives living abroad.

However flunkeyist and traitorous the south Korean government may be, can it be so shameless? Where are the authorities going to lead our people?

Reading the article, I trembled. I felt a sense of futility more than anger. A person in authority wrote an article in which he said, "Has the Right Wing in this land all died?" on the plea that the voice for democratization was getting louder. I wanted to cry, "Have the people of this land become so powerless?"

I felt as if my breast was about to burst, so I struggled to the window and opened it. Cold wind blew in and seemed to calm me a little.

I closed the window and returned to my bed. I did not want to cause anxiety to Mr. Kim, who was worried about my health.

However, I had come down with a fever the next day. At first I thought I had caught a cold, attributing it to being exposed suddenly to the cold wind. But even after several days my temperature did not drop and I began to have difficulty breathing.

Mr. Kim must have realized it was serious and suggested I go to the

Pusan University Hospital. At that time I was already so feeble that I could not even reply properly.

That day I was taken straight to the hospital.

When Mr. Kim heard the diagnosis, his face paled. I was suffering from malignant pneumonia and, in addition, an abscess. I was put in room No. 932 of the Pusan University Hospital. This happened on February 12, 1993.

Review of My Life

I passed almost one month in the hospital. Nearly every day Mr. and Mrs. Kim visited me and Mrs. Pak Hong Ja and the missionary Ri Mi Sun frequently came to see me. So Jun Sik and other comrades also came and inquired after my health with their whole hearts. When they came, they brought various kinds of foods for me, which embarrassed me.

However, I could not eat solid foods. Toward the end of February, Ringer's Solution injections began, which supported my life. I could not speak to any visitor because of a speech disorder and passed most of the time in a state of semi-consciousness. I could not lie in bed comfortably, either. I could not stretch my body nor legs. I could not help but lie on my side with my back bent. When doctors or nurses attempted to lift my legs, I felt bone-breaking pains and groaned in spite of myself. Seeing me in such a state, my nurse, Jang Son Hwa, a graduate from Seoul University, as well as my visitors, cried.

My body had hardened into the posture in which I had sat on my knees for 34 years in prison. The continuous fever, pain, difficulty in breathing and pains from old wounds tormented me terribly.

Every bodily function collapsed, but my hearing seemed to have become acuter. I could make out what the patients near me said to each other, what doctors and nurses said in low voices and even what they said in the corridor.

I heard them say that I had no hope of recovery. From the looks on the faces of the doctors and nurses I realized that I was as good as dead. To tell the truth, in the light of the state of my consciousness or various parts of my body, I more closely resembled a dead man.

The following words suddenly reached my ears.

"I heard that the North Korean Red Cross Society urged early repatriation in view of his dangerous state due to malignant pneumonia. The south is still indifferent."

"If things go this way, the old man may not live long enough to be reunited with his family."

"I wonder what the authorities are thinking. Further delay may make the north say that it would rather not take him back. It would be like sending a dead man."

They talked about the "Team Spirit" military exercise that was being held inspite of the north's demand for it to be called off and about the "special inspection" which the United States, Japan and the International Atomic Energy Agency were going to force upon north Korea. The conclusion was that the situation was developing in a direction opposite to my repatriation. I could not know who made these remarks – my comrades who came to see me, acquaintances, doctors or patients. They must have made such remarks, thinking that I was unconscious. In fact, I was nearly in a delirious state. Lying with my back bent, I stared blankly through the window at the sky. At the thought that I would die without returning to rest under the northern sky, the sky of Pyongyang and the homeland I missed, I felt as if my heart was bursting.

My past life passed before my mind's eye. It seems that when the final moments are near, your life passes before your eyes.

The first step of my struggle began with the report of a gun in Phabalri in the 1930s; comrades Jong Un Gil and Jo Ul Rok who led me to the struggle and died untimely deaths; those stormy days when I roamed about Changbai, Longjing and Erdaogang, following the sound of gunfire from the Korean People's Revolutionary Army; the young General who came to the construction site of Hwangsuwon Dam and whom I would have followed without hesitation if I had known that he was the General; the woman political worker of the Revolutionary Army who implanted the *Ten-Point Programme* of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland article by article into my heart with shining eyes and enthusiastic words; those days when I travelled between Seoul and Tokyo, taking the *Ten-Point Programme* with me; rejoicing over national liberation, enthusiastic cheers; five years after liberation that passed like an arrow; those days when I was busy working day and night in Phungsan and Hungnam; the excitement I felt when I saw the General on the platform at the Party merger conference; the eternal five years that have been engraved in my memory as the years of happiness, never to be erased in my life of 76 years; the dear five years the memory of which flowed into my heart like a tide when I thought of the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* ... Have I lived for 43 years since that time in a worthwhile manner that I can look back on without shame? My struggle on snow-covered Mount Jiri, the 34 years of imprisonment because of my refusal to convert, feelings

of frustration on being released from prison, the joy of the struggle that I regained in the writing of my notes.

I could not live in any other way because I was a member of the Workers' Party of Korea and a war correspondent of the Korean People's Army who received a dispatch paper bearing the emblem of the Republic. If one has led his whole life in a manner that can be looked back upon without repentance, is this not happiness for a revolutionary? I said with confidence that I had led a worthwhile life under the sky of the motherland that would someday be reunified. If I had any regrets, it was that I had to close my eyes far from Pyongyang and Phungsan. "Oh, how I miss the sky of the north!" I wanted to return to Pyongyang and report, "General, war correspondent Ri In Mo has returned after an interval of 43 years." Several times a day I pictured the scene in which I open the gate of my house and, entering it, say "My dear! I've come home."

However, my comrades, who had always borne this remark in their mind, had died, hadn't they? The face of Comrade Jong Tae Chol, who committed suicide, filled my mind's eye. Death also served as a weapon. I had the last weapon yet. I looked back on my whole life and summarized that I lived a shameless life. I led a life worthy of a member of the Workers' Party of Korea, which could not be led otherwise. What remained to be was only to end my life, the last moment of life, creditably. There is no greater happiness for a revolutionary than to lead his life for the General's ideas and for national reunification and lay down his life for them. When I had made this decision, I felt at ease.

Every day I met my comrades, lying in bed, and said good-bye to them inwardly. Perhaps it might have been an illusion. At times I thought I was talking with my comrades and looking around, I found that nurse Jang Son Hwa was alone before me, with a worried look.

I cannot tell exactly even now which was reality and which was illusion. It seemed to me that every day and every hour I met my comrades and those who took care of me with sincerity. But when I think of them now, all seem to have been illusions. Because the police, who "stood guard" outside Mr. Kim's door, came even to the hospital and "guarded" me. They wanted me to meet my end in a different manner from what I had decided upon.

February and March

I had already given up the hope that I would return to the north. I thought that the last battlefield was on this bed in the Pusan University Hospital.

Toward the close of February, I heard the news that the International Atomic Energy Agency had decided to conduct a special inspection of two sites in north Korea and that Pyongyang had resolutely rejected the demand. Without doubt, this was another attempt to stifle my motherland – this might be the last one judging by the mood of the south Korean authorities. It was evident that the United States stood behind the IAEA.

Hospital is known as a best place for curing diseases, but as the situation developed alarmingly, people gossiped in every corner. They were indifferent to the Presidential elections, with the attitude that it was all the same whoever became President and were unwilling to cast their votes. But faced with this crisis, they showed unusual concern.

There were various levels to the situation: if the north rejected the demands of the IAEA a "forced inspection" would be made; If north Korea fired even one shot, the United States would intervene militarily and north Korea would be unable to withstand this; because a "forced inspection" was to be done by a special inspection plane alone under the cover of hundreds of bombers, even the slight insolence would incur whole-scale devastation and the results would be evident.

Briefly speaking, this meant that north Korea could not help but accept the special inspection.

The authorities clamoured that it was a development of the situation that should be welcomed.

Their intention to stifle their compatriots was revealed clearly as never before.

How to qualify the intentions of those who scream about the dangers of nonexistent nuclear weapons in the north while requesting the aid of foreign forces, ignoring the presence of US nuclear wespons in south Korea and weapons-grade plutonium stockpiled in Japan? It was quite clear that the problem did not rest with nuclear weapons, but with the socialist system of north Korea. They feared the socialist system more than any nuclear weapons. I wonder how they can expect reunification, while behaving in this manner. They may be likened to a crow that is thinking of catching and eating a pheasant...

Most of the time I was only semi-conscious, but my hearing had become sharp. The destiny of the country was at stake. Later I learned that the whole world was watching Korea in anxious suspence. What would become of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a socialist country that the allied imperialist forces of the world were striving to stifle?

Finally, in March, the south Korean authorities, together with the United States, started "Team Spirit", a large-scale nuclear war exercise

involving the latest nuclear equipment, under the pretext of countering the "development of nuclear weapons of the north" and the "state of human rights in the north".

On the 8th of March, members of the Pusan Christian Council visited me in the hospital and held a special service praying for my complete recovery and repatriation. It was a tear-provoking sight. They desired the reconciliation and reunion of the country and nation. When will come the day in south Korea when these voices would sound louder than the voices of division and confrontation? I find it hard to express the complicated feelings I experienced at that time. I only repeated the words "Thank you" to them.

That very day, a special US marine unit numbering 5,000 started a model landing and attack exercise and the spokesman of the US army, too, announced that the force deployment for exercise had been completed and the prelude to "Team Spirit" began.

It was quite clear to everyone that it was a threat to make the Democratic People's Republic of Korea yield to the special inspection, a forced inspection. What will the fate of my motherland?

The next day, a student from Pusan University visited me in the hospital and informed me that the north had declared a state of war readiness. He said that he had heard a radio broadcast. The state of war readiness was announced by order of the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army, which resolutely declared that they would never tolerate the enemy touching even one blade of grass or one tree of the motherland.

"This time something is likely to happen," said the student. But I kept silence. My feelings were very complicated. Should this land really be swept by the ravages of war again after an interval of over 40 years? I could not suppress indignation at the US and Japanese imperialists and the flunkeyist traitors to the nation who had created and aggravated only confrontation and distrust for 40 years after the conclusion of the armistice agreement. There could not be peace unless outside forces and flunkeyist and traitors were swept away from this land.

However, quite a few people, to say nothing of the south Korean authorities, thought that if the United States assumed a more high-handed attitude, the north could not help but yield. The Persian Gulf War gave many people the idea that the United States was almighty.

On March 12, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued a government statement that it would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

This was a telling blow at the United States and the allied imperialist

forces. It was a declaration that the north would defend the country and national sovereignty at the risk of their lives.

"How delightful! The north has dealt a heavy blow to the haughty United States. I am proud to be a member of the same nation," said one student. This was natural. Most of the younger generation were discontented with the authorities, who were submissive to the United States and Japan and practised begging diplomacy. Students informed me of one piece of news after another.

Some students said the foreign news had said the United States was shocked by the government statement. Australian radio said that March 12 was the day when the earth cracked. "The north announced that when war breaks out, the US, Japan and the south Korean authorities must shoulder the responsibility and that the north had only the demarcation line to lose, but national reunification to win," one added. She was quite right to say that there was nothing but the demarcation line to lose, but national reunification to win. If a war broke out, it would be a war forced upon the Korean nation by outside force and flunkeyists and traitors in our midst.

The south Korean authorities expressed their regrets at the radical development of the situation, as if alarmed at the turn of events and repeatedly requested the United States to refrain from putting excessive pressure on north Korea. A rumour was afloat that they proposed to resume the north-south high-level talks.

They seemed to have expected that threat and pressure would cause fear, sway and disturbance among the north Korean people and shake the socialist system. This was the same expectation Syngman Rhee had when he prepared for the June 25 War.

In this light, in the 1990s as well as in the 1950s there was no special development in their understanding of the socialist system in north Korea as headed by General Kim Il Sung.

When my motherland was at stake, I lay sick in bed, suffering from a speech disorder that stopped me from even voicing my support for the motherland. The question now was not whether I would return to north Korea or not. My motherland was on the brink of a life-and-death struggle with the allied imperialist forces of the world. Around that time I received unbelievable news.

Unbelievable News

On March 10, Rev. Moon Ik Hwan visited me in the hospital. He had been imprisoned because of a visit to Pyongyang and had just been

released four days earlier. He was 75 and I was 76. Both had experienced Japanese colonial rule and the torment of the divided country, and had fought for national reunification. The front of our struggles differed, but our aims were the same, national reunification.

We had much to talk about, but I failed to be responsive because I found it hard to speak.

Rev. Moon said, "Your return to the north and reunion with your family will symbolize national unification. I hope that you will soon recover and be repatriated".

I was so feeble that I could not extend even words of gratitude and barely said, "Yes."

Then a man from the Ministry of National Unification unexpectedly told me, "The authorities have decided to return you to the north." I did not believe it. I could not.

I only retorted, "When I hold my grandson in my arms, then I will believe." "It is true," he added, "We have proposed that delegates meet. If the north is ready to accept you, you will be sent."

At that time Rev. Moon, took my hand and said, "The day is not distant when you and your wife will be reunited and hold each other. So you must calm yourself, so when you meet each other you are not shocked.". To his kind advice, I only answered "Yes," because it was unbelievable news.

How many times had they already told me to prepare, only to crush my hopes?

When I was left alone, I thought, "Why did they decide to sending me so suddenly during a tense situation. If it was true, the south Korean authorities must have some design. I wonder if they intend to cover up the image of division and confrontation they have aggravated so far with the humanitarian veil of my repatriation. That was why the man from the Ministry of National Unification must have said that "If the north is ready to accept you..." Perhaps it was because sending me, a man who was not merely an invalid, but might die tomorrow or the next day, might change criticism with a humanitarian veil. They are attempting to take away my last weapon–my death.

How can it be that the north does not know their ulterior motives? They must know well enough. Moreover, would it be right to accept me, nearly dead, in a situation strained to the breaking point? I could only speculate. I only wanted the north to choose a way that was helpful to our country, regardless of the fate of Ri In Mo. I could not help the country any more and had nearly reached the end of my life.

On the evening of the 16th of March, an excited Mr. Kim hastily came to

me and informed me that the meeting of delegates at Panmunjom had decided to repatriate me on the 19th of March. He added that in pursuance of my wife's request the north had proposed that Kim Sang Won and his wife, my nurse and my doctor should accompany me to Pyongyang.

My nurse and doctor congratulated me whole-heartedly. In silence, I received congratulations from many people.

As for the feelings I had at the time, why was I not happy and glad? When I thought that I really was about to return, my heart was pained at the thought of the comrades who had died an untimely death, the comrades who were still in prison and the comrades who were missing their birthplaces, wives, sons and daughters in the north. In addition, the thought that I return as an invalid who would be no help to my country, weighed heavily on my mind.

I had little time to sink into thought. I had to receive an endless stream of congratulations and greetings.

On the 17th of March, Rim Su Gyong called on me unexpectedly. She visited me first after she was put on parole in December of the previous year and was glad to hear that I was to return. I was heartily glad of her visit. My heart, which had been heavy with the thought of my comrades, seemed to become somewhat lighter.

She said, "When our country is reunified, I will be the first to visit Pyongyang." and, looking back several times, left my hospital room. I waved to her.

That day, members of the Pusan branch of the Mingahyop visited me and held a farewell party. They hoped that I would recover soon after returning to the north and live in happiness together with my wife and children for the rest of my days. They sang together the song *Our Wish Is Reunification* .

I sang the song with them. Of course, I sang for the most part only in my heart.

Oh, reunification, our national desire even in dream! Who is going to obstruct the longed-for reunification and lead to division and confrontation?

I had so many visitors, which gave trouble to Mr. Kim and my nurse, Jang Son Hwa. All of them hoped that I would soon recover and live happily with my family and suggested we meet again on the day of reunification.

I cannot forget four comrades who came from Seoul, including Comrade Choe Kum Nam, who visited me at noon of the 18th. All were unconverted prisoners whose family members were in north and comrades who had been locked up in prison with me.

Hugging me and rubbing their cheeks against mine, they suggested we meet in Pyongyang after the barriers of division were pulled down.

I nodded and smiled at them, but inwardly I shed tears of blood. They also must have ardently wished to return to the north. Their feeling may be briefly expressed as "Oh, how we long for the northern skies!"

I thought of Comrade Jong Tae Chol and other comrades who were buried in the mountains and fields of the south. If I could regain the strength of my youth, I would cross the nation to gather their remains and take them with me to the north. Occupied with these thoughts, I lay awake on the night of the 18th, my final night in the south.

12. MY LAND, MY MOTHERLAND

The 19th of March

On the 19th of March, I was held in the embrace of the dear motherland, crossing Panmunjom after 43 years of absence. About that day other people must know more than I. The entire north Korean people watched my televised return.

I crossed Panmunjom at about 11 o'clock in the morning. It happened six and half hours after I left my bed in the Pusan University Hospital. These six and half hours were my last in south Korea, which I left after an interval of 42 years and seven months, a period of coldness and utmost animosity.

The agents of the Agency for National Security Planning took from me six letters I was carrying, including those south Korean democratic leaders had written to my wife, saying that I was not allowed to take them with me. I began to prepare to leave at half past four and said words of gratitude to my nurse, Jang Son Hwa, and the doctor. When I came out of the hospital room around 5:45 a:m., I unexpectedly found over ten unconverted long-term ex-prisoners waiting for me in the corridor. Policemen lingered in the corridor and about the door to the lift. They did not allow me to even exchange greetings with my comrades. They waved after me and could only ask me to convey their tidings to their families when I return home.

I knew that the students from Pusan University were waiting for me to come out to the yard of the hospital, building a bonfire. I heard them sing the song *Our Wish Is Reunification* . When I got off the lift, I was made to go to the back door instead of the front door and taken in an ambulance that was waiting for me at the back door. As the ambulance raced along the road in the darkness of dawn, police cars escorted us in front and rear. It seemed that I was being kidnapped. Through the car window I saw the students and the members of the Mingahyop who were singing to see me off. Policemen and the agents of the Agency for National Security Planning watched me from the front and rear, right and left. They said they were escorting me.

Of course, I did not expect that the authorities would stroke my head

even once. But even at the last moment... Coming over to the north, I realized what a naive thought it was.

When I crossed Panmunjom, I was so feeble that I could not speak properly or even raise my hand. I barely managed to live with the help of injections of Ringer's Solution.

When I entered north Korea, everything seemed to be a dream. I was surprised to see the waves of people holding bouquets and flags. If I had not heard the people shout my name, I would hardly have believed that they were meeting me.

Endless waves of people welcomed me on the road, from Panmunjom to Pyongyang. I was disoriented. Only as the doctor and nurse spoke to me, did I know where I was.

Later I read rather detailed reports of the event on the 19th of March in newspapers, TV programmes and what people said.

Even when I entered the meeting hall of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, I did not believe that I had entered north Korea. My wife, daughter, son-in-law and the son and two daughters of my daughter came rushing to me, shedding tears, but they did not appear to me as a reality.

When I entered the Reunification House I saw the portraits of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il, and a cadre from the Central Party Committee (Later I learned he was Secretary Kye Ung Thae) conveyed to me the words of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il that they congratulated me on returning to the socialist motherland and wished me a safe journey to Pyongyang. Only then did I realize that I had entered my motherland.

There I was tended by my wife and ate a solid meal for the first time in half a month.

When my wife asked me, "What do you want to eat?", pointing to the dishes laid before me, I answered, "Anything". The brusque way of speaking at the time of our married life together revived before I knew it.

When I saw my wife for the first time in 43 years, I thought that she had become old. The image of my wife I had held in my memory for 43 years was that of a young and beautiful woman. After 43 years, she was a grey-haired old woman with a wrinkled face. Even my daughter Hyon Ok had become a middle-aged woman far older than her mother had remained in my memory. When I saw the grey hair and wrinkles of my wife, I realized what a long time 43 years had been and, at the same time, that the 43 years required fortitude and a firm belief in my wife, as well as in me. She was sitting proudly in front of me with her mind flying

to 43 years ago, keeping the promises of that time. Although I had become a sick old invalid, I sat facing her with my mind back in that time. Now that I had returned to my homeland, where my wife and daughter lived, I had nothing left to wish for. I told my wife, holding her hand, "If I die today, I will have no regrets."

At this my wife replied, "Why die? You must live a long time."

I, too, wished to live a long time. But I knew the state of my health and that my life was in serious danger. If only I could have walked across the demarcation line on foot and firmly hugged my wife and daughter!

My wife spoke with vigour as if she guessed my thoughts.

"Neglect the past things and don't think of them any more."

I answered "Yes", nodding. But how can I forget even one of them? The comrades who breathed their last on Mount Jiri, the comrades who died in prison, the comrades who still suffered in prison, the comrades who were placed under surveillance under the "Observation and Security Act" though released from prison and had to die looking toward the far-away northern sky, the comrades who promised to meet on the day of reunification, hardships in prison. None could be forgotten. Even if a miracle recovered my health completely and returned my youth to me, I could not forget them. As long as my homeland suffers from division, I would not forget the wounds I had received and the blood my comrades had shed. Dear wife, you, too, cannot forget the 43 years your youth passed in vain. Because the sorrow of national division has not ended, although we have met.

After I got into the ambulance, I was enveloped by the waves of welcoming people. They tried to come closer to the car window and wept, smiled and waved to me. At times the road in front of the car was entirely blocked with crowds of people. Some girls clung to the car door, stamping their feet. They shouted, "Phoenix Ri In Mo!"

In legend, the Phoenix set fire to itself and arose anew from the ashes every 500 years. Thirty-four years in prison was no easier than a baptism of fire. If I was a phoenix because I had survived prison, it was not attributable to my strength. If I had not believed in the great leader, the Party and the motherland in the north, I would not have survived till today nor kept my beliefs intact.

The road from Panmunjom to Pyongyang, which was several hundred kilometres long, presented a sea of people. If the ambulance stopped for a while, for any reason, people from the convoy came running and rained questions on my driver, "Why did you stop?" "Has Ri In Mo's condition worsened".

The placards reading "A warm welcome to Comrade Ri In Mo return-

ing to the embrace of the great General!" were posted everywhere. Waves of welcome washed over me. The doctor and nurses raised my hand, which I was too feeble to raise, and waved it to the welcoming people.

Everything blurred before my eyes. If only I could have brought with me the remains of the comrades who were buried in the fields and on the mountains of the south! It was not for me to receive this welcome, it was my comrades who should have received this welcome. I felt that the people in the north did not consider me as just simply Ri In Mo, but as the symbol of the many comrades who had laid down both youth and life for the cause of national reunification and for the great leader and the Party. Later I learned what underlay the enthusiastic welcome.

Once in the hospital, I watched the scene of my return on the TV screen. When I reached Sariwon, an old woman tapped on the car window and cried, "I am Kum Dan. Do you remember me? I am Kum Dan." Behind her an old man stood. Only then did I realize that she was the sister of Ri Si Ho, who died while tending my mother as she lay sick from enteric fever at the time of the Japanese rule and that the man standing behind her was Ri Chang Hwang. Memory long buried was being revived.

When I went to Phungsan after the death of Ri Si Ho, I introduced his sister to Ri Chang Hwang. Kum Dan, who obeyed me as she had her brother, agreed to the marriage without objection. I now saw them for the first time as a couple, now old, which awakened many recollections.

Of course, that day I did not recognize them in the crowd. They were drops in the great sea of humanism surging ceaselessly forward.

When the doctor said to me, "Old man, a little further, and we will be in Pyongyang," I asked him to raise my bed a little. I wanted to see the changed Pyongyang, which I had seen last some 43 years ago.

But when we reached Kwanmun-dong on Thongil Street, the entrance to Pyongyang, what came into view was not the streets of Pyongyang, but mountains of people. The windows of high-rise buildings were filled with people. The high-rises seemed to be made not of windows and walls, but of people. And a sea of flowers and shouts of welcome resounded through the streets. It was not merely a welcome ceremony, it was a demonstration of the magnificent strength of my motherland united single-heartedly behind the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il.

My motherland resolutely countered the pressure and threats of the United States, Japan and their south Korean puppets, and threw the enemy into terror with the resolute declaration that it would answer war with war! As the situation grew acuter, the south Korean puppets were

obliged to return me, a man whom they had detained under one pretext or another. This was the victory of my motherland in the extreme confrontation attended with the declaration of the heightened state of war readiness and the withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. People said it was not repatriation but winning back.

The enemy hoped that I would die. But I was alive and once again in this land.

Entering Pyongyang, I felt an invincible strength surging like tidal waves through me. Then in my mind I saw those who had brought me to the back door with sulken faces and hastily put me in the ambulance. They tried to cover up the truth with the "humanitarian" veil called "repatriation", but it was an awl in a sack.

The welcomes and cheers with which I was greeted were the shouts of victory of my motherland and the millions that won my return from the hell created by the south Korean puppets. They had brought me to paradise, a manifestation of their belief in the Party and the leader.

The street scenes of March 19 were a demonstration of the strength of our motherland I witnessed for the first time after I returned to the north.

My Land, My Motherland

After pressing through the now unfamiliar streets of Pyongyang, I arrived at a branch of the Red Cross Hospital. The hospital was enveloped in a wide garden filled with so many trees and shrubs that it seemed like natural forest.

In the hospital, the most proficient doctors and the latest medical equipment were ready for me. They had been making preparations since the campaign for my repatriation began. Moreover, after I entered Pusan University Hospital, they made full preparations, even making consultations about the suitable medical treatment.

Not knowing this, I thought of going home. My days were numbered and so I thought it was of no use to trouble the hospital. I wanted to die at home,not in a hospital bed. I had longed for home, awake or asleep for 43 years.

But my wife said, "You must receive medical treatment first. After fully recovering, you must come home walking." It was the intention of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il, she added.

I returned after a 43-year absence but was hospitalized before I could

say words of gratitude to my benefactors who had returned me to this land.

In the hospital a room was fully prepared for me. The doctor and nurses who were waiting for me moved me from the ambulance to the bed as carefully as if they were handling soap bubbles.

Later I learned that three different itineraries for my travel from Panmunjom to Pyongyang were planned according to my physical condition.

One variant was to come to Pyongyang after I turned the critical corner of my illness, putting me in the Kaesong City Hospital (The Kaesong City Hospital had a separate room prepared for me.) Another itinerary was to send me directly to Pyongyang by plane in the shortest time (The plane was standing ready). My travel to Pyongyang by land was intended if I was in "good condition".

The right to choose one of the three options was in the hands of section chief O Yun Hwan and other doctors who diagnosed my condition. It was surprising that the right to decide on the "great event", which was expected by several million people lining the 200-kilometre-long road, was in the hands of several doctors.No event of welcoming a head-of-state could be magnificent to such an extent.

I refer to this to show how my motherland prized my life and health. So was my condition comparatively "good?" It was not so. I barely managed to live by injections of Ringer's Solution and was so weak that I could not raise my hand and speak properly. Briefly speaking, I was in a hopeless state. There was no hope of recovery and the end was just matter of time.

However, the doctors chose to travel by road instead of the Kaesong City Hospital or the plane. I wonder how they were convinced that travel by land would help my condition take a turn for the better.

That day I gradually recovered vigour on the way to Pyongyang. From Sariwon I was able to wave my hand by myself. Later people said that it was a miracle in the light of the condition of my illness. They unanimously agreed my eyes gradually became bright and I began to speak clearly as I went on. In fact, but for that travel I might have remained long in the feeble state in which I left the Pusan University Hospital.

Ri Je Ma, a famous doctor in ancient times, prescribed treatments in light of each patient's constitution and character, instead of taking into account only the disease, and achieved wonderful successes. I would like to say that our doctors, too, were as wonderful as he.

When I was treated in the hospital, I caused much trouble to them. When I was hospitalized, my entire body was impaired and torn from head to toe.I was malnourished and I was in a critical condition. My heart

was extremely feeble because of a very low oxidation rate. I constantly had a fever caused by an infection in my lungs. I could barely move. I could hardly swallow food. I was like the "living dead."

When I lay in bed, my limbs were bent in the position I sat in prison for decades. When the doctors and nurses unbent my legs to recover the function of my limbs, I felt sharp pains in the whole of my body and even shouted at them to leave me alone. Moreover, when their hands approached my nose, the whole of my body shivered. My nose had suffered from water torture, torture with water containing powdered pepper and forced feeding. I instinctively showed animosity against anything approaching it in spite of my reasoning. Still, the doctors and nurses called me "old man," "grandfather", or "mister" instead of getting angry or offended and tried to cure me to the end. However much time it took, they did not fret nor got tired. So I must have troubled them much. Even now I feel sorry at this thought.

One day I was in a semi-delirious state because of a slight fever. At such times the pain due to old wounds and illusions of the past seized me. I had no clear idea of what happened that day. I seemed to have writhed with the illusion of water torture. When I came to, I found the doctors and nurses surrounding my bed. The nurses were sobbing. Seized with the hallucination, I shouted, trying to avoid the hand approaching my nose. Pitying me, the nurses burst into sobs and even the doctors were in tears.

Wiping away the tears, one nurse said to me: "Grandpa, you must recover yourself, come what may. This is the intention of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il and the wish of all the people of our country. Several hundred letters inquiring after your health come to the hospital every day. The whole country hopes that you will appear recovered on the TV screen."

My wife, daughter and son-in-law, who came to see me almost every day, told me such stories.

When my grandson and granddaughters went to school, they were busy all day replying to the question, "How is your grandpa?" When once they told the students, "My grandpa unfolded a newspaper with his own hands and read it," the whole class cried for joy, clapping their hands and surprising the teachers. The principals of the schools conveyed the words of my grandson and granddaughters to all the students and teachers at the morning meeting. Their words were met with applause and shouts of joy. When someone said, "Grandfather Ri In Mo is on TV!" at a home where my son-in-law was visiting, everyone gathered in front of the TV. These were stories that I could not hear without

shedding tears. Who am I that childrens and grown-ups show such an interest in me?

The hospital did not allow all the visitors to see me. The hospital did not want me to receive any visitor before I recovered my health. The staff did not concede even an inch, regardless of the person's position and business.

But I knew what happened outside the hospital. Every day the nurse read me the *Rodong Sinmun* and the letters wishing me complete recovery.

Section chief O Yun Hwan had already appeared on the TV screen several times on the request of viewers across the country.

He joked, "I seem to have become famous thanks to you. If not for you, I would never have had the idea of appearing on TV."

When the condition of my body improved even a little, the doctors and nurses were delighted, as if the day was a fete day, saying: "When the great Comrade Kim Jong Il receives the news, how delighted he will be?" This moved me all the more.

I asked what they meant "when the great Comrade Kim Jong Il receives the news?" The staff told me he received reports about my progress every day and told them to work hard to recover my health, obtaining whatever was needed, even at any cost.

Of course, I knew that everything from my repatriation to medical treatment was arranged under the care of the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il. However, I never imagined that he received daily reports concerning me. To him, every second was as dear as one year or ten years to an ordinary man.

In the dead of night, I opened my eyes and found the nurse sitting at the head of my bed. The light of the table lamp was turned aside lest it fell on my eyes, and fell instead on the portrait of the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il in a round frame on the table. I was aware of the potted flowers in my wide sickroom and on the window ledge and that the doctor was sitting in readiness in the room opposite the door. They were anxious to do something more for me.

"Is this real?" I asked the nurse, who was looking down at me with an uneasy glance, fearing that something was wrong.

"Am I dreaming? I am no one, but I am given such treatment."

I could not continue any more and closed my eyes. I only repeated. "Is it all just a dream?"

Was such love really in this world? The nurse wiped away my tears. Only then did I realize that I was weeping.

That night I looked back on the past 43 years and quietly sang the

Song of General Kim Il Sung . When I sang it in the south, it was a song of belief. Now it was a song of strong emotion and gratitude.

Bright traces of blood on the crags of Changbai still gleam,
Still the Amnok carries along signs of blood in its stream.
Still do those hallowed traces shine resplendently
Over Korea ever flourishing and free.
So dear to all our hearts is our general's glorious name,
Our own beloved Kim Il Sung of undying fame.

From day to day death receded from me and I revived from a withering to a green luxuriant leaf.

How should I express my gratitude to the doctors and nurses who attended me without leaving my bed for so many days? Whenever I awoke, in the dead of night or at dawn, I saw the thoughtful faces of the doctor and nurses sitting at my bedside. They tended me without leaving my bedside for even a moment until I recovered. An old tale says death stacks out of the nether world and leads the souls of the dead away from this world. Even if he tried, he could not have gained access to me. The doctor, nurses and the entire nation guarded my life.

I do not ascribe my resuscitation and recovery to the effects of medicines or to the energy remaining in my body. I believe that the love of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il and the ardent wish of the entire nation gave me strength and blood to revive. When a child, I read a story about a mysterious country in which the land was very fertile and the sunlight was warm. Dried twigs stuck in the soil put forth leaves and grow to be verdant trees. Korea was surely this land. I was a withered tree revived as a green tree in the soil of this land. The spiritual soil of this land gives life to the "dead" and leads those "bound for hell" into "paradise" – this is my land, my motherland.

"Leader ...! Oh, Father Leader!"

April brought spring to the yard of the hospital. I was taken in a wheelchair to rest among the flowers. I was now able to read newspapers by myself and realized that a new season had begun in my life. It is difficult to describe all that happened that spring. But I'd like to mention a few.

On the third of April, the great leader sent me dozens of live fishes, including trout, rainbow trout and cornet fish, saying that they would ben-

efit my recovery. Sending the fish, caught in a stream rising in Mt. Paektu, he remarked that as fresh-water fish had many fine bones, the bones must be pulled out carefully before it was served to me. I find no words to express my feelings at his generosity and concern.

I was reminded of what my daughter Hyon Ok once said to me. My daughter attended the Third Pyongyang International Seminar on Peace in Asia and the Role of Women held on September 6, 1992. When the great leader met her he took her by the hand and said that he was sorry that he had not brought me back and that he would continue to try, come what may. Returning to this land, I said time and again, "Leader, I am nothing, but you treat me like this", finding no other words to say. Almost every day I repeated this.

On the 6th of April I was awarded the medal, order and certificate of a Hero of the DPRK, which was announced in a government decree when I was in the south, and a few days later, the Order of Kim Il Sung bearing the image of the father leader. I wondered what I did to deserve such love and recognition. I still had not paid my respects to him after returning to this land.

My family suggested I make a congratulatory banner to present to the great leader on his birthday, the 15th of April. I asked them to embroider the following words on the banner, "Great father *General Kim Il Sung* , I wished you a long life in good health every year on your birthday while I was in prison in the south and, being held in the embrace of the Party after 43 years of absence, my family and I pledge our loyalty and faithfulness to you, great General, with a revolutionary consciousness and a sense of obligation as your soldier and reverentially wish you a long life on this, your 81st birthday."

The congratulatory banner was delivered on the 13th of April.

On the morning of the 15th of April I sat with my family watching the sunrise through the hospital window. I wondered if the great leader had seen the congratulatory banner and what he was doing at that moment. I hoped that morning the best wishes of the whole nation, together with my humble congratulatory banner, would be conveyed to him and please him.

Then the doctor and nurses came running and informed me that the great leader had unexpectedly come to the hospital to see me. It was hard for me to believe. To think that the leader, who should rest in compliance with the wishes of the whole nation had visited the hospital on his birthday! It was hardly believable.

In the corridor I heard the sonorous voice of the great leader telling my wife, "Comrade Ri In Mo had a hard time and so did you."

I heard my wife say, "I was able to wait for my husband thanks to you, Father Leader."

"Even if there is a leader, it depends on the way one behaves." His voice was tinged with laughter. I was staring at the door when the great leader entered my room.

This happened at half past nine in the morning. I was flustered, my heart nearly bursting. I had to offer greetings to him but was too weak to stand, unable to rise up. How vexing!

The leader approached me and, bending his back, hugged me tightly.

General Kim Il Sung, who was engraved in my mind as the star of hope together with the shot fired by the Korean Revolutionary Army in Phabal-ri 63 years ago, who became the sun of national liberation advocating the *Ten-Point Programme* of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, who for me became the pillar of my faith and will through the five years after liberation, now stood before me.

The great General, whose memory did not leave me even a day on the snow-covered Mt. Jiri and in the cold prison cell, whom every revolutionary in this country wanted to meet even once and to be held in his embrace, now reached out and took my hand.

I was truly held in his embrace!

I enjoyed the greatest happiness of a revolutionary of this country and as a member of the Workers' Party of Korea, but my tongue failed me. If only I could have told him "Leader, Ri In Mo, war correspondent of the Korean People's Army is reporting on returning from behind the enemy lines after 43 years." But his presence moved me beyond words.

The leader calmed me and said, "You bravely fought holding fast to the revolutionary principles without yielding to the torture and appeasement by the enemy and demonstrated the lofty revolutionary spirit and noble qualities of a Korean communist, a member of the Workers' Party of Korea to the whole world. I believe your home is in Phungsan. The Phungsan people are all stouthearted and clever. We owed much to the Phungsan people during the anti-Japanese armed struggle." he added.

I felt awkward and was embarrassed at the undeserved praise of the leader. At that time the doctors behind me whispered something but I could not afford to pay attention to them. Later I was told that I had lifted my hand, which could not be raised above my chest because of paralysis, to the back of my head. Since childhood, I had had the habit of raising my hand to the back of the head when I was praised.

When the father leader gave me undeserved praise, my habit of childhood revived and my hand, which was stiff with paralysis rose to the back of the head, passing the point the doctors called the extreme limit of motion.

The doctors called it a miracle, but I think it is not a miracle in the light of the love and belief of the leader. I would say that even if I had abruptly stood up, it should have been taken for granted and not seen as a miracle.

Then the leader said that I was an old Party member who had been admitted to the Party immediately after liberation and handed me a membership card of the Workers' Party of Korea that bore the number of the Party membership card of the time of my joining the Party and was signed directly by him.

How many years have passed since I had had the honour of becoming a Party member in those days of building the Party and the country after liberation! But I never forgot the date of my admittance to the Party, the sponsor of my application for Party membership and the number of my Party membership card, not even for a moment.

On the 6th of April, when I was awarded the medal of a Hero of the Republic, I said, "If I professed conversion, I could have been freed from imprisonment. But I did not convert, unable to break the oath I made when I was admitted to the Party." It was true. Because the pledge of that day was one I had made to the great leader. It was the thoughts of the great leader that gave me strength and faith in the long years. Now I was actually meeting the great leader.

I enjoyed the joy and happiness of receiving the Party membership card directly from the great leader, the founder and leader of the Party, 48 years after I joined the Party. I wondered if my life and struggle were not designed precisely for this moment.

The leader now put a wristwatch inscribed with his august name on my wrist. In a weak voice, I said, "I will be faithful to you, great General, to the end without forgetting your favour." He rose up, casting his benevolent glance on me.

"Let's have a photograph taken in memory of our meeting today."

When the hospital people brought a chair, the leader waved his hand and said that he would pose beside me. The doctors said that another "miracle" then took place. My hand, which seemed too heavy to move quickly straightened my clothes and stroked my hair. I say again that it was not a miracle.

I wondered if ever before a soldier sat while his leader stood. But, the leader, standing, had a photograph taken with me.

I tried to stand up, even asking for help, but he, lightly clapping me on the shoulder, told me to sit comfortably and said that I need not feel sorry.

Even after the photograph was taken, the leader did not leave imme-

diately and exhorted me to get well and recover my health as soon as possible and take part in the military parade in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the victory in the Fatherland Liberation War. As he left, he looked back again and again. No amount of words could describe my feelings in those moments.

From that day on I became convinced of my complete recovery and future. The doctors said that that day brought about a turning point in my life under treatment.

Even now, seeing the photograph of the leader standing beside me, I say time and again, shedding hot tears. "Leader, Oh Father Leader!"

My House

After I met the great leader, my condition rapidly improved. The doctors often said that it was a miracle, but I was impatient, thinking that the improvement was still slow. The saying goes, "When one gets old, one becomes a child." The saying seems to have been designed for me. Different thoughts crowded my mind. I was uneasy, thinking that everything was unsatisfactory.

I said angrily to my wife, who came to the hospital one week after I met the great leader: "Why have you come now? I continuously waited for you to come."

My wife was somewhat surprised and asked, "Why?"

"I wanted to consult with you about the Party dues."

"Party dues?" She was nonplussed. I demanded of her without explaining the reason: "When did you pay the Party dues?"

"When you returned in March, your dues began again," she said, "So I've been paying since March."

"What?" I was startled. I was uneasy, not satisfied.

"Even when I was in the south, my Party register was here. Therefore, I have to pay Party dues from the time of my joining the army during the war. Pay all the Party dues for these years."

I said again when she parted from me: "Please do as I have told you."

Several days after I heard her say that she had done as I asked. Only then did I feel relieved. It seemed to me that I had fulfilled what I could. I felt relaxed and asked my wife about our house.

"Where is our house? I want to go and see it."

"Let's go and see it soon."

At last, on the 10th of May, I went to my house in Sojang-dong of Pothonggang District. I had heard that the house was allotted to me by

favour of the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il, but directly seeing it, I could hardly believe that it was my house. It was a cozy two-story house in a garden covered with flowers. It was too big for me, who was born and grew up in the countryside of Phungsan.

"Grandpa, please allow me to show you around the house."

Pushing my wheelchair, my grandson Sung Chol showed me round the house, explaining about its exterior and interior.

I only said time and again, "I feel really grateful."

I was born and grew up in a house with low eaves and roofed with wood tiles and set out on a long journey from the small two-roomed house in Hungman. When I returned to this land, carrying an old trunk with a broken handle, doing no service to speak of, I little imagined that a house like this was in store for me.

An old saying goes, "People return home, dressed in golden clothes." I returned home, dressed in hemp clothes. But as silk clothes were in store for me at home, it should be said that I returned home and was dressed in golden clothes.

"I am grateful. I am really grateful." Every room of the house was clean and packed with gifts sent by the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il and articles of comfort sent by different parts of the country and from abroad. The garden was covered with the flowers transplanted carefully by students from Kim Il Sung University and young people and students from across the country.

"Today I have prepared the noodles you like," my wife said. At this my grandson looked over the table and made a remark tinged with dissatisfaction, "Grandpa likes onions, but...," and my granddaughter rattled, "You don't like mushy boiled rice, do you?" This made me, my wife, daughter and son-in-law laugh nearly to tears and brought a lump to my throat.

My wife laid the table for her husband for the first time in 43 years. I sat at the table. I was amazed by all the events that had led us to this simple dinner.

At the same time I was seized with sadness. How good it would be, if the dinner party was attended by the comrades who still remained in the south and must be missing their families in the north, their families in the north waiting for their return, Mr. Kim Sang Won's family and Ji Hyon who had no parents and was having a hard time, taking care of the three brothers and sisters!

When a journalist asked Mr. Kim, "Are you ready to accompany Mr. Ri In Mo in case an agreement is achieved between the south and the north?" one year before my repatriation, he replied explicitly, "I, too, want

to visit and see the north. If the authorities allow us, we, my wife and I, are ready to accompany Mr. Ri In Mo." When we parted, we could not even say good-bye properly, interrupted by the agents of the Agency for National Security Planning. How Ji Hyon, too, longed to see the native village of her father! How Mrs. Pak Hong Ja and missionary Ri Mi Sun, who took care of me like their own relatives transcending religious belief and political views, wished this day for me!

When I was in the south, I thought of my acquaintances in the north, awake or asleep. Now that I had met with them, I all the more missed the comrades and the people who were kind to me in the south.

This cannot be explained by the words of a wise man who said that there is no complete happiness in this world. It was due to the tragedy caused by the division of the country and nation.

I all the more felt grateful to the great leader and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il for their favours and to the people in this land.

One June day I dropped by my house and was sitting with my family. The manager of the East Pyongyang Clothing Factory unexpectedly called on me. There was no knowing how she got wind of presence. I was at a loss and asked her her business. She said that she wanted to fit a wardrobe for me.

In fact, I had outgrown my old clothes. It was natural because I had weighed 40 kilograms when I arrived in the north but now weighed more than 60 kilograms. The manager had guessed this might be the case and brought a seamstress with her.

How meticulously she measured my body! When she asked me to raise my arm or my head, she was so embarrassed that it seemed I was doing a favor, instead of the other way around.

To help and give pleasure to others seemed to have become an attribute of the people living on this land.

I felt this in every place in the city I visited when I was recovering.

In June I began to tour different places in the city using a deluxe car the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il presented to me as a gift.

When I visited Mangyongdae, the birthplace of the great leader, I wrote in the visitor's book, "Mangyongdae, I missed awake or asleep, is the pillar of our faith."

When I fought in the south, my comrades asked me whether I had been to Pyongyang. When I said yes, they always asked me about Mangyongdae. When I said I had not been there, they heaved a sigh as if it was their own affair, saying, "What? You've been to Pyongyang, but you haven't visited Mangyongdae?" The comrades in the south knew much about Mangyongdae, reading the reminiscences of Kim Ku and

others who attended the North-South Joint Conference. Hearing their sighs, I, too, regretted not having been there. I finally visited Mangyongdae in the twilight of my life.

Visiting different places in the city, I keenly felt the wise leadership of the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il, who was well versed in every field. His leadership reached every field.

I was impressed by the people who met and saw me off wherever I went. Whenever they saw me, they greeted me with applause and warm words, surrounding me like a wall. Even at such times, they took precautions not to disturb or inconvenience me. It was the same with the grown-ups as well as with the children.

"Be quiet. Grandpa is watching you." "Don't go too close. It will inconvenience grandpa." I heard these remarks more than once. The children all resembled my grandson and granddaughter and the grown-ups all reminded me of my daughter, son-in-law and comrades.

When I sang the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* on a visit to the Arch of Triumph, they quietly sang the song with me. When I went up the Tower of the Juche Idea, they waited for me until I descended after taking a look round and saw me off with applause.

When I went up to Ulmil Pavilion on Moran Hill, several school-children were picking something on the road in front of me. It turned out that they were clearing away pebbles lest my wheelchair bounce on its way up.

It was the same when I visited the Chollima Bronze Statue and the People's Study House, and wherever I went. How awkward I felt and what a lump I felt in my throat at such times!

One student said, "We all wish that Comrade Ri In Mo stays in good health and strides this land for many more years. It is the intention of the great leader and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il."

Returning after 43 years, I found that my home was not only the two-story house in Sojang-dong, but was found everywhere across this land and the whole country.

It was a home with the great leader and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il as the heads of my family. That was why, when the dear leader was concerned about the honoured soldiers disabled during military service in defence of the country, many young boys and girls married these soldiers, and when he showed concern over the last years of life of childless war veterans and old men, people volunteered to become their sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, helping them without hesitation. When he was distressed over orphans, many families volunteered to take care of them, becoming their fathers and mothers.

Single-hearted unity was not something material. It meant the birth of the indivisible entity known as the socio-political organism, an entirely new social unit never before known to the world. With the passage of time I keenly felt that it could be formed because the great leader and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il represented the center. Any place in the whole country was my home, my motherland. When I was in the south, a journalist asked me, "Which do you take as your motherland, the north or the south?" I replied, "The south is not my motherland, only the north is my motherland."

Observing many things over time after my return, I wondered when I would be able to say that the south as well as the north was my motherland. This can only happen when the whole country constitutes one home with the great leader and the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il as the heads of our family.

The more people I met touring different places, the more pressing the thought became. The south Korean authorities places obstacles in the way of north-south dialogue, calling for "unique window for dialogue", fearing that popular sentiments in the south might turn against them, I suppose. It is similar to shading the sunlight with your hand.

When I was in the south, how often did we tell the legendary stories about the beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il! He was the sun of our mind.

Now I am living held in his embrace in the country that has become one family under his light.

One day my grandson Sung Chol asked me, while pushing my wheelchair through the flower garden, "Grandpa, which flower do you think is the most beautiful?" I replied without hesitation, "Kimjongilia is the most beautiful and best flower in the world."

"I Met Him!"

On July 23rd I received an invitation for the National Veterans' Meeting to be held in Pyongyang on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of our victory in the Fatherland Liberation War.

It was quite unexpected for me to take part in the National Veterans' Meeting in the presence of the great leader Kim Il Sung and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il! I could not suppress my excitement at the thought that I could see them even from far away. When I sat down to see the certificate of a delegate to the meeting in front of me, various thoughts occurred to my mind: I, who was in prison for long time, failing to fight the enemy well, am a delegate of the National Veterans' Meeting,

I wonder... The thought of my comrades who passed away, not seeing this day and the happenings in the days of war passed before my mind's eye like a panorama.

In the morning of the meeting, my wife and all my family members helped me dress and I left for the April 25 House of Culture.

I was ushered into a waiting room. I had no idea what glory was awaiting me. As I was waiting for someone to guide me to my seat, the great leader and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il entered the room.

Prior to this, I had never even seen Comrade Kim Jong Il in person.

Father leader Comrade Kim Il Sung congratulated me for my participation in the meeting and said that my revival was ascribable to the embrace of the socialist fatherland, the Party's solicitude and the affection of my comrades. At this time looking up at Comrade Kim Jong Il, broad, smile face, I said to myself, "Father Leader, my health has been a gift from the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il. If not for him, I would not long have been in this world."

I felt remorse and guilt. On the previous May 3, I said to a senior official of the Central Committee of the Party visiting me in the hospital: "If I was a man of Party spirit, as soon as I crossed over the demarcation line on March 19, I should have gone straight to the Central Committee of the Party and greeted the great Comrade Kim Jong Il before going for the hospital! "Then I made up my mind to greet him first when I left the hospital.

However, I was visited by him in this manner. As I exerted myself to sit up, he leaned his body toward me. I barely calmed down and said, "I often wanted to bow to you. Please accept my warmest greeting!"

At this, he remarked, smiling brightly, "You seem to have gotten much better. That makes me happier than anything else." And when he gently urged me to sit comfortably, a lump formed in my throat, so I said no more. It was he who, seeing me as the incarnation of faith and will when he was told that I was still alive, saw to it that I was honoured with the title of a Hero of the DPRK, the highest honor given to citizens, and Kim Il Sung Order and who stressed that I must be returned to the embrace of the Party. At the end of February, as the US and south Korean authorities' moves to ignite a new war reached extreme lengths he sent my daughter a letter, saying, "Our Party does not forget Comrade Ri In Mo, the incarnation of faith and will." The lines of that letter always made me sob: "Does not forget."..."Does not forget", not "Will not forget".

The letter mirrored a firm resolution and will to return me to the motherland without fail. Thanks to that resolution and iron-will I was able to return.

Even during the critical situation of confrontation with the enemy he listened every day to reports of the state of my health and offered all sorts of favours to me, saying that my health should be recovered without fail.

Every day in the hospital began with listening to his remark that I must recover at the earliest day so that I can enjoy a happy life. He was really a guardian of my life!

The moment the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung said that I could live for another 40 years and so must enjoy my long life, Kim Jong Il smiled more brightly. That smile was truly like sunshine.

At that time I believed I must live another 40 years. I made up my mind to live a long life in order to repay his concern.

As the meeting was about to begin I was guided to the middle of the front row of the platform. My seat was between the seats of the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Il. I was so surprised that I supposed something was wrong, but when I looked at the front I found my name written on the name plate. The man who guided me whispered in my ear that my seat was chosen by the dear leader Comrade Kim Jong Il himself.

He nodded to me meaning that I should sit at ease.

As the meeting opened the veterans shouted, "Let us fight at the cost of our lives for the respected Comrade Supreme Commander."

In the 1950s we had turned out in the struggle against US imperialists and the Syngman Rhee puppet clique, shouting the slogan "For the respected Comrade Supreme Commander!" Hearing this slogan in the 1990s refreshed my feelings.

Next to me, General Kim Jong Il, the Supreme Commander of the People's Army at this time, sat down.

When the imperialist countries in the world formed the allied forces and ran amuck to swallow up our fatherland under the circumstances in which socialism in some countries has been frustrated, he smashed the enemy's frantic moves at a stretch with matchless nerve and firm determination. His accurate judgement, resolute determination and merciless blow left the enemy trembling with fear; he imbued the people with the warmest love and dutifulness by showing an example of loyalty and filial duty. At the same time he transformed the Korean people into an unrivalled large contingent, united with one mind.

In response to his order to shift to a state of war readiness the entire people turned out as one and 1.5 million young men volunteered for the People's Army. The members of the League of Socialist Working Youth pledged to put into effect the decision of the Eighth Congress of the LSWY on becoming "5 million guns or human bombs".

Great Comrade Kim Jong Il was the faith and the will of our nation.

That day, upon returning from the meeting, I requested an official interview with journalists. By nature I deemed interviews to be disagreeable to my temperament and social standing, but on that day alone I could not but speak out my impressions and joy.

I would like to tell you what I had said to the journalists that day, because it has become my new faith.

"Today I saw a great sun. I met the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il for the first time, a broad smile on his face. His image was really like a brilliant sun. Obviously I saw a great sun. I've keenly felt that since the sun shines the future of our fatherland will be bright and boundlessly prosperous."

When I met the attendants of the meeting I told them, "Although I have returned home as an invalid, I lost nothing." This is my true heart.

I keenly felt that I lost nothing though I returned to the homeland as a disabled old man after wasting my youth behind bars and under house arrest. Although I am nearly 80, I have regained my youth and happiness. I have enjoyed a happiness and youth another man could not enjoy, even though he were born 100 times. I have ascended to such a height of genuine life.

That night I could not sleep, picturing in my mind the comrades who would be far away and I said to them repeatedly, "Today I saw him"

At the Zenith of Life

They say that after 40, it is all downhill. This stands to reason in the sense that at about that age a man reaches the zenith of his lifetime.

However, I was almost 80 when I found myself at the zenith of my life.

As for today's honours, I feel as if I am living a dream and sometimes think over how these honours came to me.

Someone said that since I had suffered such incredible hardships, I must truly enjoy happiness and deserve such honours. Sometimes my wife, daughter, grandson and granddaughters, too, speak similar words. So I was greatly puzzled. There is a saying "Pleasure follows pain". But this saying is not at all proper for me.

I never thought of such honours or the zenith of life even when I suffered in the prison cells of south Korea. Did I, expecting such honours, remain an "unconverted long-term prisoner", overcoming all sorts of torture and wicked acts?

No. I could not discard my beliefs and succumb because I had the great leader and our Party, because I was a member of the Workers'

Party of Korea and because the system under which I lived for five years was so good. That was behaviour befitting a member of the WPK and a citizen of the DPRK. Briefly speaking, it was to defend a genuine man, distinguished by belief and ideology. It was because the great leader became a pillar for me when I was in prison and when I was floundering in the vortex of south Korean society after my release from prison. The respected Comrade Kim Jong Il defended my faith and will. At the same time it was because our Party and people firmly safeguarded our style of socialism, smashing the frantic anti-socialist and anti-DPRK campaigns of the US and Japanese imperialists, the allied forces of world imperialism. It was the great leader, the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il and our people who defended my faith and will.

I am greatly indebted to the great leader, the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il and our people. However, I was the one given honour and love.

In August some time after the National Veterans' Meeting and the review of the Korean People's Army held in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the victorious war, Kim Jong Il sent me a video cassette player, TV set, recorder and piano, which my wife was so anxious to have. My wife was moved to tears and I spoke out, looking up at his photo, taken at the time of the veterans' meeting: "The respected Comrade Kim Jong Il, when you only give favours and ask for nothing in return how should I behave?"

When I came back home after making a trip to Mt. Paektu, Jongil Peak and his native home at Mt. Paektu the birthday table sent by Comrade Kim Jong Il made me shed tears. My wife and daughter also cried. If there is an after life, late mother, too, would have been moved to tears.

In my tender age, on my birthdays Mother travelled 14 kilometers on foot to visit the old home where I had lived and returned home lonely.

If she was now alive she would say to me: "Though you grew up fatherless and have reached 80, ignorant of the foods cooked by your mother all your life, you have a genuine father and mother."

When, on October 12th, the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il sent me quilts that an expatriate had presented to him, I cried out, looking up at his photograph with tears in my eyes: "The respected Comrade Kim Jong Il, when you only bestow affection on me like this, how should I behave? Who am I, that you give such gifts to me?"

Smiling benignly in the photo, he seemed to reply "There is nothing to spare for our people. If that is what they want I should like even to pick a star from the sky and give it to them. Is not Comrade Ri In Mo one of our people?"

I am gradually understanding that the affection I have enjoyed is one which is given by the great leader and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il to all the people living in this land.

I have become one of our people, living under the care of the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Il.

The stories about the love and trust by the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Il are limitless.

Here I would like to copy poems dedicated to the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il's merits I wrote in the autumn of last year.

POEMS DEDICATED TO THE DEAR LEADER

1. Reflecting on My Fate

A dead man cannot be revived.
It is impossible for a train to Hell
To alter its course to Heaven.But my fate
Contradicts this belief.

More dead than alive
Summoned by a prison number,
Deprived of my name in prison in the south
I was a breathing fossil.
I was a withered old leaf.

But now
Away from the entrance to Hell
I have become Ri In Mo whom the world knows,
Full of vitality, like a green leaf.

Speaking of such good fortune,
The people in the south say:
This is grace granted by
The "God of Fortune" in mythology.

That is not true.
The man who bestowed such good fortune on me.
Is you, benevolent Kim Jong Il,
A great man.

You brought me, a dead man, back home
On a chariot, over the impossible demarcation line,
With the change to meet the great leader,
Calling me to your side.

So today I want to tell
Of my fate.
You, a benevolent man, represent my fate,
Beside representing the fate of the nation and humanity.

I say, with all my heart,

O, noble man, Kim Jong Il,
You are the "God" of fortune,
You are the peerless "Saviour" of our fate.

2. Thinking of Love

Being exposed to the cold
Scantily clad, in a prison cell in the south.
I now lie in a comfortable bed
Under warm quilts.
Upon awakening, I ask:
"Do I understand such love?"

This withered man, with a stick for support.
Now walks in his garden with his grandson.
Stopping, I ask;
"Do I understand such love?"

It is easy to receive love,
It is difficult to understand it
For a man, outside the world of love.
It is more difficult to understand it fully,
As it grows stronger.

Over forty years
In the desolate, withered south,
In an evil world without love,
I even forgot the word "love" itself.

But I was moved to tears at the demarcation line
Where warm love embraced me,
But I failed to understand
Where that love came from
Love so warm, so kind.
I soon realized, though nobody told me,
It was love from you, benevolent Kim Jong Il.

In the air I breathe,
In the sunlight warming my body
Your love overflows
Your love is in my front room,
Your love is in my back room,
Upstairs and downstairs,
Your love is everywhere.

You treasure me infinitely,
You pay high tribute to the deeds I have done,
You have given me everything in the world,
Yet you want to give me more...

I wonder how such great love
Could really exist in the world.
I, a man thrown into a world bereft of love,
Am now over seventy.
And I understand your love,
Albeit belatedly, I weep.

Your magnanimous love wrings tears
From the dry eyes of this old man,
Your love makes us understand
The meaning of the fatherland and revolution.

Your love allows us to live honestly
without knowing selfishness,
Your love makes us strong
To be able to thwart any attack by sword.

Your love cannot be described in simple words,
Your love cannot be received lightly.
Oh, dear Comrade Kim Jong Il,
You, a man with such warm love,
Are the incarnation of a great love.

3. Ode to Faith and Will

You praised me as the incarnation of faith,
I do not deserve to be called this.
The faith which you, Kim Jong Il, gave me,
I will never abandon even if death faces me.

You praised me as the incarnation of will,
I do not deserve to be called this.
The will that you, Kim Jong Il, gave me,
Shall never be daunted to my last breath.

The strongest faith in the world
The firmest will in the world,
These are your attributes,
Kim Jong Il, great iron-willed man.

Because you are leading us,
I have inherited your spirit.
Thanks to your warm feelings
Ri In Mo has recovered his breath.

When tormented by alluring bits of conversion
The image of the fatherly leader was in my heart,
And the man who gave me the greatest courage
Was you, the dear leader,
The son of Mt. Paektu.

Though my hair turned gray with time,
You were always my God,
So that I had faith in my thirties,
And a will in my seventies.

You are strong
So you always win,
You overcome all hardships with a smile.

You are the General,
Controlling Heaven and Earth.
Because you, a matchless General, lead us,
I see with my own eyes
Our invincible Republic endowed with faith and will,
Our people ever determined to win,
Our soldiers and people are ever-victorious.

History flows on because of your faith,
The Earth rotates because of your will,
The great General Kim Jong Il!
This old war veteran presents
A bouquet of genuine faith and will
To you, a brilliant man.

The climax of life means the climax of happiness.

As one of the people living in this land, I contributed to *Rodong Sinmun*, the organ of our Party, an article about the greatest happiness our people enjoy. Its editorial board edited my poor article with all sincerity. The reader already must have read the article and some part of it duplicates with the above-mentioned notes. But I should like to conclude my notes with it.

WE ARE BLESSED WITH THE LEADERS

To the Editorial Board of *Rodong Sinmun*

Allow me first to greet the editorial board of our newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* which provides us with mental nourishment.

I have learned many things through our Party newspaper and my eye for the world has become keener.

I was formerly a war correspondent and am now enrolled as a honourary journalist in several newspaper companies.

I consider it the assignment I received from our Party of my own accord as ever to write as a war correspondent. But I failed to fulfil the asignment properly. I am seized with remorse, as I, a member of the Workers' Party with the Party card No. 306, contributed only one article to the Party newspaper in the year since I returned to the embrace of the Party.

I should have written as befitting a war correspondent soon after I returned to the embrace of the motherland, but only now have fulfilled the Party assignment on account of ill health. I frankly reflect on my having been weak in Party spirit. However, there is a saying that one should exert oneself looking forward, but not regret, looking backward. Though it seems somewhat belated, I send this article to your editorial board in order to discharge the duty of a Party member for as long as my heart beats.

March 18, 1994
Ri In Mo

The 19th of March, the day I returned to the socialist motherland across the Military Demarcation Line, was a historic day when love won out over hate.

One year has elapsed since that day. This unforgettable one year was like a dream during which I gained and realized many valuable things that could never be obtained at the risk of my life or bartered for the whole world. I am moved to tears when I recall the past year.

The 43 years I spent in south Korea were days and nights bearing death, leading to the loss of life and tomb, whereas the one year I have spent in north Korea is minutes and seconds of a new life in which I took a new lease of life and enjoyed my best fortune.

In the past, people are said to have returned home after many years

of living abroad, having made their way in the world or amassed a fortune. In my childhood I saw those who fouled the clean air of the village by smoking *Hiro* cigarettes.

But I lived for over 40 years in south Korea until I aged like an old tree and returned home, with only an empty trunk with a broken handle. What I did bring with me, if anything, was confidence in our leader, our Party and our socialism. This can be said to be the most valuable spiritual asset I brought. This confidence grew stronger during my life of vicissitudes in south Korea and, I believe, is shared by many intellectuals in that part of our motherland.

I realized a great deal and learned much after I returned home.

Among the things I learned was the fact that our people are blessed with their leaders. I keenly felt this!

When I left for south Korea in 1950, I only knew the great General Kim Il Sung, peerless patriot and unparalleled hero. On returning home, I found another General engaged in politics. He is our leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il, who is respected by all. Needless to say, in south Korea I had heard much about Comrade Kim Jong Il, who was called "Chinjikim-dong" (abbreviation in Korean for "dear leader Comrade Kim Jong Il"), but I learned much more about him after my return home.

Other people undergo vicissitudes without having a genuine leader in their national history, but our people live with their chest thrown out, because they have two peerless leaders at the helm. What good fortune this is!

Our people are greatly benefited by having our leader Comrade Kim Jong Il at the helm, an unexcelled hero distinguished both in literary and military arts, who is extraordinarily loyal and dutiful to the President, at a time when the situation of the country is very complicated.

Whenever I admire the personality of Comrade Kim Jong Il as an outstanding man, I slap my knee in spite of myself, and think of how blessed our people are with him as their leader. We are truly blessed with our leaders, which causes others to envy us.

1. We Have a General of Generals at the Helm

It is said that in a favourable situation a general is liable to be left without public recognition, but in hard times a general is well appreciated. In a difficult situation the merits of a great man and a general stand out. That is why a general is probably said to appear in difficulties.

I found a great man in the dear leader tiding over hardships and adversity.

As for hardships, we were never in such extreme adversity as we were during the year of my return.

Our motherland was confronted with enormous difficulties when the United States and the Western capitalist countries together kicked up a "nuclear row" in an attempt to crush socialism in Korea.

While in south Korea I heard the authorities slandering the future of our socialism, the preposterous comments of the yellow press, and the apprehensive remarks of those who admired north Korea.

When the rumour was spread that I was going to be repatriated to north Korea, an unidentified agent, who supposedly was from Seoul, visited me and suggested that I think over returning to north Korea. He said, "Now that Moscow has toppled and socialism has disappeared, do you really want to go to north Korea?"

I retorted sharply to the fellow, who probably was an agent of the Agency for National Security Planning, "My motherland is north Korea, not south Korea. No matter what the situation may be, I'm going to my motherland. It is no concern of yours. Don't interfere with my return to north Korea."

However, after my return, the situation in the homeland became so aggravated that I closely followed the developments of the situation and the trends of world politics. But our motherland, with invincible Kim Jong Il at the helm, stoutly held its ground.

When the United States threatened us from the south with the joint military exercise "Team Spirit", it was the wise General Kim Jong Il who threw cold water over the provocateur in the spirit and strategy of a famous general, issuing the dignified order that not a single tree or a blade of grass of our motherland was to be touched. When they attempted to violate the supreme interests of our Republic internationally, through the "special nuclear inspection", Kim Jong Il displayed the resolution and will of a brilliant commander, defending the honour of the motherland by issuing another statement that such gangster-like arguments and strong-arm actions would have no effect upon us and thát no threat or blockade could surprise us.

When he saved the motherland with the courageous decision of a great man, which no other would have taken, and the authority of a general under terrible circumstances as the world watched us with anxiety and apprehension. I believe our Korea has benefited, indeed, by being blessed with such a General.

In south Korea I saw the United States handling and managing the

"Republic of Korea" as it pleased, whereas in north Korea I saw the dignity and fair play with which the Republic stood face to face with the United States on an equal footing and received what it deserved. I admired the wonderful event, ascribing it to our General Kim Jong Il.

When the United States broke the promise it had given to our Republic and egged the green bellicose elements of south Korea on to confrontation and war, it was General Kim Jong Il who checked the reckless frenzy with an iron will, to answer dialogue with dialogue and war with war. When the USA was about to choose military pressure once again, it was our General Kim Jong Il, an unparalleled famous commander, who reversed the situation through the resolute declaration that we, just like the big countries, have rights of option.

General Kim Jong Il is a really staunch man who turns an adverse wind into a favourable one.

Take my case for example. Had it not been for the staunch Kim Jong Il, how could I have returned to his embrace during such a grim semi-war situation?

At the time, I did not speak out because my life was in danger. But I saw a confidence in victory and optimism on the faces of the north Korean people.

The north Korean people wept when welcoming me to the embrace of the Party. I, too, wept.

I think that the tears shed by a flood of people and the stream of bouquets were manifestations of their gratitude to President Kim Il Sung and General Kim Jong Il for rescuing me from death on the strength of a great love. At that time our socialism of Pyongyang had already gained the upper hand on the capitalism of Seoul.

What I saw after my return to the motherland was victory, a growth in strength.

I was surprised to see the review of troops and mass demonstration in July of last year, held in celebration of the 40th anniversary of victory in the Fatherland Liberation War. I also admired scenes from a documentary film showing a review of troops held in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Army. I drew strength in seeing how our self-defence capability grew in might. The film made me cry, reminding me of the past war and the guerrilla action on Mount Jiri.

The armed forces of our country and the strength of single-minded unity have increased much in comparison with the past war.

I ascribed it to our being blessed with our leader and felt so happy at having Kim Jong Il at helm that, on returning home from the parade grounds, I told my grandson to sing the song of our dear leader.

I felt so well that I even indulged myself with a glass of wine. I originally liked to drink wine, but could not enjoy it for nearly 40 years in prison. Now I abstain from wine on the doctor's advice. But I drank a cup of wine. I was so pleased at the thought that our national power had become stronger thanks to our dear leader, and that there is nothing to be feared in the world. I realized that wine tastes best when enjoyed on a suitable occasion.

The remark that when led by an excellent leader, a small country can become a great ideological power, a great political power and a great military power, should not be belittled.

Our dear leader Kim Jong Il is the great hero who wins by ideology, by strategy and by courage.

When speaking of a general, people often mean a soldier who fights bravely. In Korea, I think, the commander who possesses both literary and military accomplishments, shedding light to the world with ideology, and routs a formidable enemy with strategy and courage, is also a victorious general.

As the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung praised him, our Kim Jong Il is a brilliant commander possessed of both literary and military accomplishments.

Statesmen of the world have all tried and still try to rally people behind them, but it is difficult to find a statesman who has realized such an ambition.

People cannot be rallied by mere desire or by coercion. They can be united, I believe, only by the strength of a great idea, by the strength of politics and love.

I found this truth in the ideas, politics and love of our Dear Leader.

People of the entire country spoke in the way their leader wished and strode in step with him, inspired by his will, demonstrating their single-minded unity. I saw them behaving in this way in Pyongyang, on my way to Mt. Paektu in Ryanggang Province, in People's Army units, and on construction sites.

I met several general secretaries of foreign communist parties. The general secretary of the Communist party of one country said to me, grasping my hand, "I gain strength in seeing a future in the socialism of Korea. The lever of movement in the present era is in the hands of Comrade Kim Jong Il."

I replied, "You're right. Our leader moves the world, placing it onto his palm." He agreed with me.

He is a general who wins but, I think, not one who loses. Our leader Kim Jong Il is a general of generals who is always victorious.

When Comrade Kim Jong Il leads us, we always win. So, though I am not a poet, I wrote the text of the song *We Will Win Because You Are Leading Us* and submitted it to our beloved leader.

Recently one of my acquaintance in south Korea sent me a letter. He wrote that he had learned through the daily *Pusan Ilbo* that I had written the text of the song *We Will Win BecauseYou Are Leading Us* and asked me to send a copy of it and the music to him. He added that the world as described in the song will definitely come.

It is not only the north Korean people who are convinced that they will win under the leadership of Kim Jong Il. The conviction is also shared by the south Korean people.

Patriotic-minded people in south Korea used to watch the quack politicians who kowtowed to the great powers and were at their beck and call without any principles of their own in an atmosphere of worshipping the great powers. Observing the way General Kim Jong Il carried on politics with his philosophy, and how he squarely faces the great powers with iron nerves as befits the dignity of the nation, they say that only under the leadership of such an excellent leader can man's dignity be glorified, the identity of the nation be consolidated and the future of the country is bright. They are very happy that the nation is blessed with such a peerless man.

There were times when our country was strong and prospered in its 5,000-year long national history, beginning with Tangun. With distinguished leader Kim Il Sung and General Kim Jong Il at the helm, our motherland is mighty, our people are powerful and our Korean nation is the focus of the world as it has never been before.

2. A Man of Noble Human Qualities Is with Us

They say an eminent person is, primarily, a great man before he is a great general. That is why, I presume, since olden times a general of no virtue was likened to a warrior without a sword.

In my opinion, Korea's triumph in overriding a foul raging wind can, in a certain sense, be called the triumph of a great man and a lofty virtue.

Since my return I have been fascinated by the virtue of that great man, our dear leader.

His virture and human makeup are brought out in bold relief by his moral sense. Moral sense is said to be the fragrance and value of a great man's personality.

At the National Veterans' Meeting, I had the honour of meeting the illustrious President Kim Il Sung and the dear leader Kim Jong Il. Tears blurred my sight the moment I met these men, who are so infinitely generous and tenderhearted. As I wrote in my poor poem, they are the benefactors who restored me to life–from a withered old leaf to a fresh green leaf full of vitality–and showered honours on me.

When I again met the President, who is revered by the entire people, I lowered my head and shed tears of gratitude, moved by his kindness and concern: on his birthday last April, he kindly called on me in the hospital and favoured me with fatherly trust and love; not content with this, he put a gold watch, inscribed with his noble name, on my wrist, and handed me a membership card of the Workers' Party of Korea, which I had been yearning to have for the past 40-odd years, having affixed his signature to it personally.

I first met our dear leader Kim Jong Il on the opening day of the National Veterans' Meeting. He grasped my hand warmly, gazing affectionately at me, a gentle smile on his face; a lump rose in my throat at the thought that he was the very person who had saved me.

He had discovered me, a veteran soldier, when I was being supported by a farmer's family living on the South Sea coast after having lived in a rest home in south Korea, as if he were searching for a gem in the sand, and went to great pains over several years to bring me back to the motherland; he had given instruction to this effect hundreds of times. Looking up to him as my benefactor, I could not keep back tears welling up in my eyes at the thought of his profound humanity and affection.

His kindheartedness knows no bounds. Each time our delegation had talks with a delegation from the south, he told our delegates to settle the question of my repatriation. He said that the struggle for my repatriation should be launched by appealing to the conscience of the world, and that my wife and daughter should be induced to write me a letter to encourage me, saying that they were living in Pyongyang. One New Year's Day he emphasized that I should be brought back that year at any cost, and that as my life was in grave danger and I might die if left in south Korea, I must be brought back as early as possible to recover my health. He told the officials that they need not report to him before they bring me back and that he would feel relieved only when he saw me living with my wife and daughter under the same roof and taking a stroll with my grandchildren on Moran Hill and in the streets of Pyongyang.

When I was about to return home, our dear leader showed meticulous solicitude for me, saying, "Ri In Mo is going to return. Leading Party cadres should meet him at Panmunjom and citizens of Kaesong and

Pyongyang should all come out in the streets and welcome him. A medical group should be formed with competent doctors and famous medicines are to be used liberally. A good house is to be given to Ri In Mo and a cook be chosen to prepare appetizing foods for him. When he fully recovers his health, let him be seated beside the leader on the platform at the review of troops to be held in honour of the victory in the Fatherland Liberation War. Let him visit Mt. Paektu and his old home. Let the primary school in his native village be named after him as the Ri In Mo Primary School."

I was still more surprised when I received a piano as a gift from him in July of last year. After liberation, my wife gave music lessons to pupils. One day she asked me to buy an organ for her. At the time I promised I would as soon as I had enough money. But I failed to keep my promise for over 40 years, and this always weighed heavily on my mind.

Our dear leader Kim Jong Il read my thoughts and sent us a piano as his gift and thus gratified even my wife's wish, which I had failed to meet.

He was kind enough to send me a complete set of bedding. Later I learned that Koreans living abroad had prepared a unique quilt for him with the sole desire that he enjoy good health. On receiving it, however, his thoughts turned first to me and, saying that as I had not had a quilt while in prison in the south, it was me who needed it. He sent me the quilt that he was to use. He is our benevolent leader.

A few days ago, I learned that Kim Jong Il made the following remark in connection with the first anniversary of my return home: "Why did our Party suggest bringing back Ri In Mo one year ago? He is a soldier who fought for the motherland and spent 34 years in prison. However tense the situation may have been and even if we were in a semi-war state, only when we brought Ri In Mo home, did we discharge our obligation to a revolutionary comrade. He is our comrade who fought for 30 or 40 years, believing in us. If we did not rescue him, who would have saved him? A revolutionary must have a sense of fidelity. It is like life for a revolutionary. I had previously read a story in a foreign book that when Napoleon attacked Moscow, a multitude of French soldiers were killed or taken prisoner. But Napoleon went to ruin and another monarch took the power of state. When he was told to repatriate the French prisoners of war he refused, saying that he did not care about the POWs of Napoleon's time. Reading this story, I thought that the fate of the French prisoners of war was miserable because they had the wrong leader. When we were making effort to bring back Ri In Mo, I recalled this story once again and made up my mind to take him back by all means. So we have succeeded, though with difficulty, in bringing him back home by

launching an arduous struggle. In the world, there are many stories about the struggles in prison of revolutionaries, but no story about the revolutionaries who fought all their life adhering to their revolutionary principles such as those who did so for 30 to 40 years behind prison bars in south Korea. We must not forget the comrades who fought in south Korea and we must be faithful to our moral duty toward them. I think this is the love our Party can give to the soldiers."

What a warm-hearted statement permeated with a sense of revolutionary obligation!

Therefore, if it is for the good of Kim Jong Il, I will gladly become the foundation stone to support him, even if I change into a clod of earth. This is the cherished desire of my life.

He has a strong sense of revolutionary obligation, profound love and consideration.

After my return to the homeland, I saw the documentary film *A Shining Life under His Guidance* many times. Looking at the scenes of the film, I was fascinated by Kim Jong Il's personality and tears welled up unbidden to my eyes.

I thought that Kim Jong Il is stout-hearted, but he is considerate, tender-hearted, kind and easily moved to tears.

A scene of the film shows this: When an official unexpectedly died in an accident, Kim Jong Il, who was giving field guidance to a local area, sets out in a pouring rain in the dead of the night, although the men accompanying him dissuaded him: he narrowly crosses the railway bridge over a raging stream, stepping from one sleeper to another and arrives at long last in Pyongyang that night.

The image of the leader of a country walking step by step across the railway bridge hanging high over a swollen stream in a deep mountain valley, grieving at the loss of a soldier he had personally trained is an engraved image of love.

He is an unusually feeling person. People say that a true hero has a feeling heart.

President Kim Il Sung remarked that he is easily moved to tears and that Kim Jong Il is much more so.

One of his soldiers died of illness. At this sad news Kim Jong Il hurried to his bedside and cried, and cried, rubbing his cheek against the cold cheek of the deceased: "I'm here beside you. Why don't you get up? Giving your heart to me, did you want to depart from me this way? You worried me very much while you were sick. Now you make me cry over your death."

Seeing this scene of the film, I felt that the more courageous the gen-

eral is, the easier he is moved to tears. "Dear General!" I exclaimed and could say no more.

A person who does not have a feeling heart or virtue is not moved to tears. Only the great man who is kind-hearted, compassionate and unusually sympathetic can weep in this way.

It is Kim Jong Il's people-loving philosophy to love man and prize him as a omniscient and omnipotent being. Love for the people is the basic principle of Comrade Kim Jong Il, and the spirit of serving the people is his political credo.

The regime, as well as the ideology, is people-centred. His policy is a people-centred one, namely, a policy of virtue and benevolence, an all-embracing policy. This is the policy which embraces me.

"We serve the people!" is a watchword first used by Kim Jong Il.

The kind-hearted farmer Kim Sang Won, to whom I was greatly indebted when I was in south Korea, has four children.When I lived in his house, I quite often heard him and his wife exchanging worry-filled words on account of school expenses. In contrast, I now have a grandson and a granddaughter who goes to middle school and another granddaughter who attends university. One year has passed since my return home, but I have never heard them complaining about school expenses.

Our President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il's idea "The people are my God" and their love for the people are blooming in the system of free education that is admired by the world's people.

When I was in south Korea, I was put in the Pusan University Hospital. I worried much because of fabulous medical fees. This caused much more worry to the people around me and those in opposition. They were sympathetic towards me, but whenever I heard them speaking with anxiety about the shortage of money, I felt I lay on needles and pins.

When I received medical treatment for months coming over to north Korea, I was worried about the doctor's bill. One day I said to my wife that the medical fee must be a big burden to the family. She said, "There is no need to pay even a penny, because medical care is free. So, don't worry. Take medical treatment well." Indeed, the love and benevolence of President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il moved me to tears.

I should like to ascribe all these things to being blessed with the distinguished leaders.

I was moved by the modesty of Kim Jong Il, and here I would like to touch upon it.

When a parade of the armed forces was held in celebration of the 40th anniversary of victory in the Fatherland Liberation War, I saw the dear leader Comrade Kim Jong Il at a short distance away on the platform.

At first I expected to see Kim Jong Il in the uniform of a Marshal. But he was in the modest closed-collar attire, which I used to wear in Phungsan in the past, instead of the uniform bearing the Marshal's insignia.

When I saw Kim Jong Il in simple attire, I was impressed by his modesty.

From olden times, simplicity and modesty are said to be virtues. Kim Jong Il is really a "great commoner".

Hence, the people follow him. Why not? The force of love and virtue is great. It is only natural that the masses flock to the embrace of one possessed of great love and virtue.

Indeed, dear Comrade Kim Jong Il is a man among men. Our people are blessed with their leader, a man among men.

3. My Resolution

As our people are blessed with their leader, we should hold the great leader in high esteem. I ask myself whether there is anything obscure in my respect toward the leader and recollect myself. If I was to behave properly, as befitting a soldier paying reverence to the dear leader, I should have visited the Central Committee of the Party immediately after coming through Panmunjom last year and reported about the activity I had carried out until then; but I went to the hospital.

As a member of our Party, I did not behave properly.

Although I am in the autumn of my life, I am determined mentally to uphold the leader with loyalty, and physically to become an impregnable wall defending him.

I tell myself that I must not forget President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il even for a moment. If I forget them even for a moment, I may unitentionally overlook an impairment of their dignity.

Toward the end of last year, one overseas Korean visited me in my home. Although he was 54, he stammered incoherently, aided by an interpreter, as he did not know the mother tongue. Deeply disgusted, I said: "Living in the south for over 40 years, I mixed with people from Kyongsang Province and Seoul. But I did not learn the south Korean dialect and continued to use the north Korean language. It's a pity that you don't know the mother tongue, though you're grey-haired already. I am unhappy feeling as if I have met a foreigner. There are things one may forget and things one must not forget. The august name of President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il must definitely be spoken in Korean."

At this the overseas Korean said, "I have come to share the joy of meeting you, but feel ashamed. In the future I will learn the Korean language and visit you again. Then I will greet you in Korean."

I feared that I might become insincere in my attitude of respecting the leader, in the future, as is the case with that overseas Korean. Thus I whipped myself again.

I want to strengthen my resolve to defend socialism at the risk of my life.

It seems that those who have lived under capitalism see how good socialism is and those who have lived under socialism see how bad capitalism is.

I have lived both in the south and in the north. I keenly felt that we should not forsake socialism even if we die and that capitalism is not a fit way to live.

South Korea is a society in which the rich become richer, and a handful of haves live in luxury. The poor become poorer and the majority of the labouring masses, the havenots, live in tears, on the verge of death.

A society in which a minority enjoys the luxuries at the expense of the majority in poverty cannot be a true society, and such life cannot be a true life.

People may possess money or property today, and lose them tomorrow. Tomorrow they may acquire them and lose them the day after. In my opinion, however, socialism under which all live evenly in abundance without the rich and the poor, should remain forever with our people.

The mind of respecting the leader and defending socialism should be clean at all times. The people who like to receive from the state but dislike to repay it are not pure-hearted. I should not have the selfish idea of having everything without paying for it. If one has selfish ideas, it may cause trouble to the leader. So, I fear that if my family is accustomed to accepting favours only, they may become selfish and degenerated mentally.

Only when we are accustomed to contributing and not to only accepting, will we give pleasure to the leader.

I also criticize myself about my lack of a sense of Party organization.

To pay Party membership dues, too, should become an occasion to dedicate one's pure heart of loyalty and filial devotion to the Party and the leader. I now pay my Party membership dues with this thought. Last year the father leader paid me a visit and handed my Party membership card to me in person. The following day I paid up all the Party membership dues that I had not paid while in the south. I believe it is the duty of a Party member to clear his membership dues that are in arrears.

While paying the Party membership dues, I reviewed my life before the Party organization. I felt ashamed, recalling that I was so tormented in prison that I attempted suicide and thought about the written declaration of conversion, even if only for a moment.

Today some people tell me that only if I am healthy and my face appears on the TV screen does it encourage and please them. I had not accomplished any big exploit for the country but am receiving a big grant from the state. How can I remain idle?

It is said that at times when one does not know the merit of happiness, one cannot fully enjoy it.

In south Korea I badly missed our leader and the embrace of our Party. I was tormented by the thought of when my desire would be satisfied. Now that all my wishes have been attained, I try not to forget the happiness I enjoy today.

Therefore, I want to live every day and every hour, telling myself:

-When I wake up every morning I must first think of President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.

-Whatever work I may do, I must always do it having President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il in mind.

-Before going to sleep, I must first wish our great President and our dear leader good health.

-Whenever I dream, I must dream of President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.

-We who are blessed with the leaders must be loyal and faithful to them.

THE SORROWFUL JULY

I did not think that I would finish my memoirs this way. To think that the fatherly leader passed away, he who provided me with life and encouraged me saying that I may live another 40 years. I could not believe it.

In May and June, almost every day the healthy image of the leader was in the newspaper and on the TV screens. Almost every day he met foreign delegations and with many people involved in the anti-Japanese struggle and visited cooperative farms. Towards the end of June, the news of the north-south summit meeting was published. It said that the man in authority of south Korea was to come to Pyongyang to meet with the great leader from the 24th to the 27th of July. I don't know how to express the great excitement I felt at that time. I was seized with the

heartwarming thought that national reunification had come at last. To tell the truth, however, the shock did not derive from Kim Yong Sam's visit to Pyongyang. Kim Yong Sam's travel to Pyongyang was only the result to the last generous favour the great leader bestowed on the person who was already disqualified for treading this land. No one in north Korea would be moved or pin hope on his visit. People said: "A dog's tail will not change into a weasel's tail in three years. He looks like a brother of a professional entertainer. He comes holding a white flag. He has no other flag to come with. Originally he has no his own flag."

Everybody thought that the summit meeting in Pyongyang would be followed by another round of summit meeting in Seoul. My thoughts were the same.

Suppose our leader visits Seoul.

If the sonorous voice of the father leader resounds over the mountains and fields of south Korea and spreads, all of our comrades buried in nameless graves will rise and shout "hurrah." They shouted "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" at their last moment, looking toward the northern sky. The shout "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" will reverberate over the mountains and fields of south Korea in response to the sonorous voice of our leader. It will mean reunification of the country.

The great leader was acclaimed as the sun of our nation, a legendary hero and the saviour of our people in the early 1920s and has lived for long together with our people.

When I was in south Korea, I more than once heard about the Seoul Railway Station in August of 1945, which seethed with the joy of meeting the great leader.

A comrade from Jolla Province told me that his father went to Seoul carrying balls of boiled barley and stayed for over two weeks in front of Seoul Railway Station to meet the General, who was returning home in triumph. On his death-bed, his father left his will, which said, "The General will surely come to Seoul. Please meet and greet him in my stead." The comrade said that every year his family made it a rule to sort the grains of glutinous rice of top quality after the harvest even in the year of bad harvests and to set them aside to greet the General with.

I can assure you that the south Korean people have the same feeling. I have spent 43 years in that land. Many people there frankly talked with me. They must have felt safe, as if I were a stone wall or a grave. They talked about our leader.

I imagined the July and August when the whole nation would rejoice over national reunification. The cause that our leader has devoted his 80 years to will now bear fruit, I thought. The father leader never forgot

national reunification, even for a moment. To the questions of a foreign journalist, "What do you think is the greatest present you can give to the people?" he replied, "It is the reunited nation." The desire of the leader and our nation will be met, I thought.

But what a bolt from the blue this was.

Twelve o'clock on the 9th of July. I could not believe my ears. I wanted to shout for the people all over the world to hear that it is false information. But I could not utter even a word. No words came to me. I felt as if the sky and the earth, and everything of the world collapsed at once.

When I saw the father leader lying silently in the mourning hall of the Kumsusan Assembly Hall, everything went dark before my eyes.

"Father leader!

"What is the matter? Has the sky fallen down? Has the mental mainstay that I defended all my life collapsed?

"Our Leader, didn't you make me, who was as good as dead, recover my health? Didn't you call on me on your birthday without taking a rest and say that I could live for another 40 years? What am I to do if you go before me?"

These words I have written in the condolence notes could hardly express one one-thousandth or one ten-thousandth of my feeling.

When I met the doctor and nurse in charge of my care I only took them by their clothes and shook them. You revived me and made me healthy. Why didn't you guard the life of our leader who was healthy and the heart of our nation?

Why can't you make the heart of the great leader beat again?

Stories were told about different miraculous phenomena that took place after the death of the leader. A flock of herons flew to the bronze statues of the great leader across the country. A copious rain poured down. A cloud of dragonflies covered the sky. The water of Lake Chon on Mt. Paektu boiled. However, I wanted to shout that all these are not miracles. Even if the sea dried and changed into a mountain and if a mountain changed into a sea, it is not a miracle. Now that the great leader has passed away, the only miracle in this world would be if the heart of the great leader were to beat again.

Sorrowful July; July will forever remain a month of sorrow and grief for our nation.

The great leader is not only the sun, but also the saviour of a nation of 70 million and the oppressed peoples of the world.

The world's public had much to say about the death of the great leader:

"The world revolution lost its great bulwark", "The world lost the most

distinguished great man of the modern era", "A giant star fell in the course of a history full of vicissitudes."

Only ten months have elasped since I wrote the article *We Are Blessed with the Leaders*. I wrote about our people's happiness at having as leaders two great men who will never appear again in history.

Meanwhile, the father leader passed away. My heart even now aches at the thought of the great Comrade Kim Jong Il standing in the mourning hall of Kumsusan Assembly Hall. He looked emaciated and pained. I wanted to meet him and say, "The respected Comrade Kim Jong Il, take care of yourself, think of our people, please. Now we have only one leader, great Comrade Kim Jong Il."

The greatest exploit of the great leader, who brought about revolutionary achievements and accumulated the experience of struggle enough to fill the sphere of the revolution and construction, is that he put forward the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il as the leader to carry on the revolutionary cause of Juche through generations.

When the world went dark before my eyes and I felt as if I fell into an abyss at the sad news of the great leader's death, it was the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il who supported my mind. At the moment when I heard the news about the great leader's death, I thought of the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il.

We have the dear leader. He stands at the head of our Party and the state and in the vanguard of our revolution. But for this faith, our sorrow and grief might be that of despair and sorrow at confusion and loss of orientation.

From that moment on I thought and continue to think that the dear Comrade Kim Jong Il is precisely the great leader.

To support the dear Comrade Kim Jong Il with sincerity is to guard the everlasting life of the great leader. Our nation will prosper only when we support and follow Kim Jong Il with a single mind.

One day, as people shed tears of sorrow and grief on Mansu Hill, the dear Comrade Kim Jong Il saw people going up to the statue of the leader with wreaths in rain and told the officials, "We are truly blessed with the people. We should devotedly work for these people". None of the great men or leaders of the world have ever said so before. Only our leader, the great Comrade Kim Jong Il, could say so.

People believing and following the leader, and the leader entirely believing and loving the people; this is today's reality of this land led by the dear Comrade Kim Jong Il.

Therefore, I believe my homeland is invincible and ever victorious.

Let us always think only of the great Comrade Kim Jong Il to repay even one ten-thousandth of his love of the people.

It is the great people that know and follow a great man.

Such a nation and such a people have left their trace on history.

In the era of the great leader, our people defeated the most atrocious two imperialist countries and built a strong socialist country that has become the motherland of Juche envied by all countries in the world.

The people of the Soviet Union built the first socialist state in history in the era of Lenin and Stalin and defeated fascism. The Chinese people built a new prosperous China under the leadership of Mao Zedong.

The history of the revolutionary struggle of the popular masses is, at the same time, the one of the struggle of the leaders of revolution.

Was there such a leader in any age and in the history of any nation as our leader, who has devoted his all for the good of the people for over 70 years of vicissitudes? Was there ever such a leader in the world as our respected Comrade Kim Jong Il, who bears intense loyalty to the great man of our revolution and has achieved the singlehearted unity of the leader, the Party and the masses through benevolent and all-embracing politics? Whenever I see the great image of the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il and hear his august name, my heart resounds with the song of faith *We Will Win Because You Are Leading Us.*

Yes!

We will always win because the great Kim Jong Il is leading us. His name is the symbol and banner of victory.

When our people follow the great Kim Jong Il, victory is in store for them. This is the truth proven by history. It is the absolute truth I have keenly felt throughout my whole life.

I am sure that this absolute truth is implanted in the hearts of our people.

And, truth is power. But it is not realized of its own accord. I'd like to tell the readers in conclusion:

You must know how to defend your leader at the risk of your life at any time, and in any circumstances.

Misfortune and disgrace are in store for those who do not know and do not defend the great man. This is not an idle remark of an old man in the last phase of life. I have lived nearly all my life behind enemy lines. You do not know the enemy's craftiness and brutality.

As far as the cause of national reunification in this land is yet to be achieved and as far as imperialism remains in the world, my last remark is as ever:

You must know how to defend the leader!...

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